

COMPOSITIONAL STYLE AND AFRICAN IDENTITY:  
A STUDY OF MODERN NIGERIAN  
ART MUSIC

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A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY(PH.D)  
IN  
MUSIC

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC  
UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER  
LEICESTER ENGLAND

JULY 1987.



Omojola Olabode - COMPOSITIONAL STYLE AND AFRICAN IDENTITY:

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ABSTRACT

The introduction of European culture and Christianity to Nigeria in the second half of the nineteenth century was to lead to changes in the socio-political, economic and religious features of Nigerian society. Since traditional, pre-colonial, Nigerian music was strongly tied to these features, the introduction of European culture and Christianity also had significant effects on Nigerian musical culture.

One important result of the contact between European and Nigerian cultures is the growth of the European-derived idiom of written compositions conceived for presentation on a concert platform.

In this thesis, such works which have been written by Nigerian composers (from 1940 onwards) are studied with a view to assessing how the composers have sought to meet the artistic demands of contemporary Nigeria by integrating European and Nigerian elements. The thesis provides discussions on historical developments in nineteenth century Nigeria, musical activities in the Church, and the characteristic features of Nigerian music. These discussions constitute the necessary historical, cultural and musical background to the study of the lives and works of six of the major composers of Modern Nigerian Art music in Chapters 5-11.

The last chapter summarises the major findings of the study and assesses the problems and the prospects which the growth of this new idiom faces in Nigeria. The chapter identifies the need for a greater emphasis on the teaching of traditional Nigerian music in secondary and tertiary institutions as an important condition for the propagation and the appreciation of the works of modern Nigerian composers.

Compositional style and African identity:

A study of modern Nigerian Art music.

Volume One: Text

Volume Two: Music examples



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people have been very helpful in various ways towards the completion of this research work. First of all I must express my profound gratitude to my parents Mr. and Mrs Omojola for their moral and financial support. Right from the beginning of my educational career, they have continued to be the most important source of inspiration for me.

I am also very grateful to my academic supervisor at Leicester University, Mr Anthony Pither for his thorough and diligent supervision. Without his numerous suggestions and advice, the quality of this thesis will not have reached its present state. I also express my gratitude to my Head of Department, Dr. Robert Meikle, who was very helpful in various ways on both academic and administrative matters.

During my fieldwork in Nigeria, many people were of tremendous help to me in different ways. These include Dr. MoLoye Bateye, who, apart from providing information on Fela Sowande and Ayo Bankole, also accommodated me free of charge in his house. Others are Mr and Mrs Sunday Adediji, Mr Wole Adetiran, Mr Toyé Agboola, Mr Martin Oni, my other colleagues at the Ibadan Polytechnic, Prof. Atta Mensah, Dr. Zulu Sofola, Dr. Akanji Nasiru, Mr. Femi Faseun and Mr. Debo Ajayi, a true friend indeed.

I am also grateful to the Librarians at the Universities of Ibadan, Ife, Nsukka, Lagos, Ilorin and the National Archive, Ibadan for making available to me the facilities of these Libraries, and the manager of the University of Ife

Sound Archive for providing recordings of the organ and orchestral works of Sowande.

My profound gratitude also goes to Professor Akin Euba, Dr. Samuel Akpabot, Mr Okechukwu Ndubuisi and Dr. Joshua Uzoigwe who provided scores and recordings of their works as well as relevant information on their compositional career.

Professor Robert Armstrong, Mr. Yemi Adeleke provided vital information on Yoruba folk opera and traditional music, while Pa Olaolu Omideyi and Dr A.K. Achinivu provided vital historical and musical information on Nigerian church music. To these people I am very grateful.

I also appreciate the help of members of my family: my sisters and brothers(whose names are too numerous to mention!),my "mum"-Mrs Babalola; my aunties- Mrs R. Adeyanju, Mrs. Olaniyi, Aunty Aina, Aunty Funke, Aunty Tala; my uncles- Brother Akinbo, Mr C. Alabi; my cousins- Kayode Babalola, Kunle Olaniyi, Solape Adeyanju and Funso Olaniyi. Funso accommodated me freely in his flat during my numerous visits to Ilorin. Then of course mention must be made of my good friends at Leicester. I am grateful to Ayo Omotola, one of my most trustworthy friends who provided both financial and moral support. I have also enjoyed the company of Dr. Lai Oso, Ayo Oyeleye, Tokunbo Taiwo and Helen Robertson (who all read different chapters of the thesis and offered valuable suggestions). I am also grateful to Dewunmi Kadiri, Wangui Goro, Katangole Kyalo(the "Ugandan proffessor"), Sylvia and Sama Lengor, John Ebohan, Kunle Odifa, Tony Giles, Anne De Grave, Geraldine Forbes, Musa Danladi, Shehu Misau, Abubakir Abdulahi, Idiong-Esit, Layachi Djabou, Haccine Zitouni, and

C.C. Ihekaibeya of the Nigerian High Commission, London, who helped with the Ibo translations.

Finally, I am grateful to the toiling masses of Nigeria, to whom this thesis is dedicated, and without whose hard work it would not have been possible for the Government to grant part sponsorship for this research work.

My Grand appreciation goes to the Almighty God for making it all possible. To Him I am most indebted.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Although a considerable amount of research has been carried out on traditional African music, contemporary musical idioms in Africa have received relatively limited attention by scholars. It is only in recent times that scholars<sup>(1)</sup> began to accept the fact that, while the preservation and documentation of traditional forms are laudable research projects, new, modern musical practices are also worthy of attention.

The emergence of new musical idioms in Nigeria should not be seen as a novel phenomenon. In other words, the element of change has been a constant factor in the history of Nigerian music. This position, however, contradicts the view that "until very recently, African music has been static for several centuries and its present state represents ancient forms of music".<sup>(2)</sup> Quite to the contrary: Nigerian music has always undergone processes of change either internally generated or effected through the influence of a foreign culture. Music is a unit and an aspect of the totality of a people's culture. Since culture is, by its nature, a dynamic phenomenon undergoing a constant process of change, it can be rightly ascertained that Nigerian traditional music as we know it today is in every likelihood different from what it was several hundred years ago.

One of the most important instances of external influence on Nigerian traditional music came as a result of the contact between Islamic and Nigerian culture. As Nketia has observed:

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- (1) Studies which have been carried out on Modern African musical practices include those by Phillips, T.K., Yoruba music (Johannesburg, 1953); Collins, J. "Ghanaian Highlife" African Arts, vol. 10, pt.1, 1976 and Coplan, D. "Go to my Town Cape Coast: The Social History of Ghanaian Highlife" in Eight Urban Musical Cultures, University of Illinois Press, 1978.
- (2) Euba, A. "Preface to the study of Nigerian music" Ibadan, Vol. 2, 1965, p.62.

"the impact of Islamic and Arabic cultures had a far reaching influence on the Savannah belt of West Africa. (This has led to) the rise of an Islamic ruling caste and the formation of Islamic states... Such states were formed (as in Northern Nigeria) by leaders ... who had embraced Islam and who felt committed to wage holy wars in order to subjugate the indigenous populations under the political rule of Islam. The potentates of such states adopted (among other things) some Arabic musical instruments, particularly aerophones and drums, and features of vocal technique, identified with Islamic cantillatiph, such as ornamentation."<sup>(1)</sup>

More recent musical changes which have taken place in Africa, through European contact should, therefore, not be described as unauthentic. Rather, they should be seen as part of the evidence of the age-long propensity for African musicians to adapt their musicianship to conform to socio-cultural changes within the society. In this regard, the introduction of Christian missionary activities and the British colonial administration of Nigeria in the middle of the nineteenth century have led to some of the most significant musical changes in the country.

Perhaps the most far reaching of such changes is the introduction of European classical music which is characterised by musical performances by a group of professional musicians playing from written scores, to a listening, non-participating audience. Performances of such works often take place in the church, university and polytechnic campuses, school and college halls and public halls in towns and big cities such as Enugu, Calabar, Ibadan, Akure and Lagos. Audiences for such works are drawn mainly from Christian denominations, the university and college communities, middle and upper class people such as civil servants, businessmen and politicians.

In Nigeria today are a significant number of composers, trained in Universities and Conservatoires, both at home and abroad, writing works

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(1) Nketia, K. The Music of Africa, London, 1979, pp.9-10.

which are conceived along the lines of European music but which often employ a considerable degree of African musical elements.<sup>(1)</sup> As will be seen later the most important objective of these composers is to help create a modern tradition of Nigerian Art music through a fusion of European and African elements.

What this thesis sets out to do is to examine, through a study of the works of the most notable figures in the tradition, how these composers have sought to evolve a new national idiom of Nigerian Art music.

Prior to the arrival of European missionaries in the middle of the nineteenth century, Nigerian music was predominantly a religious or a social event. The concept of music as a purely contemplative tradition was not a popular element in traditional, pre-colonial Nigeria. Although there were examples of traditional musical performances which take place outside a specific social or religious context,<sup>(2)</sup> the conception of music as an integral part of an extra-musical, social or ritual event constituted the predominant musical practice. In addition to the predominant use of music within an extra-musical event, is the fact that a musical performance is often conceived as part of a multi-media experience. As Euba has observed,

"Much of the pre-colonial traditional music is practised in the context of one or more of the other performing Arts. There are, for example, the use of music as an integral part of dance, of poetry and of dramatic expression all fused together in the same performance context. In addition, music and all these other performing Arts are often presented in combination with the visual arts such as sculpture, design, painting and costuming..... Music is viewed in terms of its relationship to the total art complex and not as an isolated phenomenon."<sup>(3)</sup>

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- (1) For a list of some of these composers see Omibiyi, M. "Nigerian Musicians and Composers", Nigeria Magazine, Nos. 128-129, 1978.
  - (2) In Yoruba land for example, Palace musicians often entertain the Oba (the King) and his Ijoye (Chiefs) usually in the evenings under moonlight.
  - (3) Euba, A. "Criteria for the evaluation of New African Art Music" Transition, Vol. 49, 1975, pp.46-47.



For example, among the Yorubas - one of the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria (the other two being the Igbos and the Hausas) - traditional music can be categorised under two distinct forms, religious and secular. In religious worship, music is usually performed to appease and to invoke the spirits of deities such as Sango (the god of thunder) and Ogun (the god of iron).<sup>(1)</sup> Apart from the ritualistic use of music, musical performances in Yoruba land are also featured in religious festivals. Such festivals usually follow sacred rites which take place at the shrine of a deity being worshipped. Religious festivals provide opportunity for communal music-making during which everybody in the community shares a satisfying musical experience. Communal music-making also takes place within purely social events, such as naming ceremonies, marriage ceremonies, funerals and the coronation of a new Oba (the King).

Yoruba traditional music consists of both instrumental and vocal music. Instrumental music types are varied and are usually named after the instruments employed in them. For example, we have Ere Kiriboto (Kiriboto music), an ensemble of five drums of the membranophone family made of a calabash resonator, covered with the skin of an animal; and Ere Dundun (Dundun music), an ensemble of double headed hourglass tension drums.<sup>(2)</sup>

Although musical performances are predominantly communally based, specialization exists in Yoruba music. Musicians who grow up to become specialists are usually those born into a family which has a long history of specialist musicians. Such families are called the Ayan families. Although musicians are often rewarded for their performances, they generally make their living through other occupations such as farming and hunting.

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- (1) These deities are lesser gods who, as messengers to the Olodumare (the Almighty God), have delegated powers.
  - (2) For a study of Yoruba instrumental ensemble, see Thieme, D. A descriptive catalogue of Yoruba musical instruments, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Catholic University of America, 1969.

As in Yoruba land, musical performances in Hausa land are closely tied to political, religious and social events. As a result of the introduction of Arabic and Islamic culture to Hausa land, as far back as the thirteenth century, that region is today a predominantly Islamic area. Musical practices in the area reflect both the political and social features of an Islamic state. For example, musical performances are prominently featured in the palace to entertain the paramount chief (the Emir) and his visitors. Likewise, ceremonial music, Rok on fada, is performed regularly in front of the Emir's palace. During such performances the Emir reasserts his political authority, while his subjects reaffirm their confidence in, and the acceptance of, his leadership. The advent of Islam has, however, not completely eroded traditional, pre-Islamic religious practices. One musical type, strongly associated with such religious practices and which still survives today, is the Bori possession music. This music, it is believed, has enormous spiritual power which can help worshippers to reach a state of ecstasy from which they could communicate directly with their ancestral spirits.

As in Yoruba land, some form of professionalism exists among Hausa musicians. As King has observed:

Hausa professional musicians belong to a distinct social class which has the character of an enclave within the society because of its low social status, hereditary membership and dependence on patronage. Such patronage is usually provided by the Emir, palace officials and chiefs who till today constitute the aristocrats - feudal lords in traditional Hausa society.<sup>(1)</sup>

Prominent Hausa musical instruments are the alghaita (a wooden, oboe-like instrument which has a bamboo reed), Kakaki, (trumpet), goje (a 2 string fiddle) and gangan, an hourglass, double headed drum similar to the Yoruba dundun.

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(1) King, A. "Nigerian Music" in New Grove Dictionary of Music, Vol. 13, 1980, p.239.

As in Yoruba and Hausa lands, traditional music in Igbo land is strongly tied to extra-musical events which provide a means of expressing group solidarity and transmitting traditional norms and beliefs from one generation to another. According to Nzewi:

The Igbo systems and ideological formulations were established on and buttressed by communally binding and viable mythological concepts and covenants. These were periodically validated or regenerated or commemorated in order to ensure a continuing binding compact. Such periodic communions required highly stylized media that would give super-ordinary atmosphere, impact and candour to the event... These media (which) constituted traditional theatre in all its scope and ramification incorporate the performing arts areas of music, dance, drama and mime.<sup>(1)</sup>

Examples of social and religious uses of music in Igbo land include that which accompanies initiation rites into the masquerade cult (Iba mmuo), funeral music (Ekwe dike) and wrestling music (Egwu Mgba). Prominent musical instruments in Igbo land include Ngedegwu, a xylophone made of wooden planks laid on banana tree resonator), Ekwe (a wooden, slit drum) Ogene (a metal gong) and Oja (a wooden five hole flute). One of the most popular forms of instrumental music which makes use of all these instruments is the Egwu Mgba. Although there are specialist musicians, especially instrumentalists, musicians in traditional Igbo land, like those in Yoruba, make their living through other occupations such as farming and carving.

As a result of the functional and utilitarian position of music in traditional Nigerian societies, the close connection between music and other arts, and the strong interaction between performers and audience during a performance; the understanding of music and the definition of musical style often take into consideration (in addition to purely musical elements) the position of music within a multi-media framework. For

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(1) Nzewi, M. "Some social perspectives of Igbo traditional theatre" The Black perspective in music, 1978, p.114.

example, the understanding of the Igbo Ofala (Yam eating festival) music can only be achieved by relating the music to the extra-musical context of the Ofala festivals. It is against this background that the emergence of a purely contemplative, European derived, Art music in Nigeria represents a significant musical innovation. The predominant emphasis of this new tradition is aesthetic, and as Euba (one of Nigeria's modern composers whose works are examined in this thesis) has noted:

"the composers (often) intend their works for performance by experts before an audience which is not encouraged to participate in the performance. This in a way constitutes a radical change in the African approach to music... The concept of music for its own sake which is inherent in dissociating music from its utilitarian function represents problems for a people accustomed to using music not only within the framework of other arts, but (also) of social activity."<sup>(1)</sup>

Since musical practices in traditional Nigerian society are strongly tied to religious, social and political activities, the introduction of Christianity and European culture to Nigeria was bound to have had a significant impact on Nigerian musical culture. As a result of European intervention, the pre-colonial, independent ethnic groups were transformed to become part of a single political entity - Nigeria. With a population of about 100 million and about 250 different ethnic groups, it is the most populated African country. This major political change was accompanied by the emergence of cosmopolitan towns, the introduction of modern means of communication - the cinema, radio and television and the emergence of European-trained educated Nigerians. These factors provided the socio-economic and cultural basis for the growth of modern musical idioms in Nigeria.

The most important foundation for the growth of European-derived modern musical idioms in Nigeria, as in many African countries, is,

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(1) Euba, A. "Criteria for the evaluation of New African Art Music" Op. cit. p.48.

however, the Christian church. As Nketia has observed, the adoption of European culture in Africa was

"encouraged and strengthened by the activities of the Church, which preached against African cultural practices while promoting Western cultural values and usages. It adopted a hostile attitude to African music, especially to drumming, because this was associated with "pagan" practices. Moreover, this music did not appear to be suitable for the form of Christian worship that Westerners were accustomed to.... Because indigenous African music could not be used, the substitution of Western music was vigorously pursued."<sup>(1)</sup>

- In addition, the church through its Mission Schools, also provided opportunities for the training of students in the theory and practice of European music - a feature which still exists.

This study focusses mainly on written compositions by Nigerian composers who have been influenced by European classical music. This category of music is referred to in the thesis as Modern Nigerian Art music. Although the history of Modern Nigerian Art music is relatively recent, dating back only to the 1940s (with the writing of Scwande's organ works),<sup>(2)</sup> it is necessary to provide both the historical and the musical process which anticipated its emergence. Thus Chapter 2 focusses on the events which took place in the nineteenth century which were to provide the basis for the growth of Modern Nigerian music. Important points discussed in Chapter 2 include the transformation of some Nigerian towns from their pre-colonial rural setting to large cities, and with it the introduction of Christianity and the growth of European concert music. Chapter 2 also examines the factors which led to a revolt in the church when Nigerian Christians agitated for their own church, free from European domination. The discussion in Chapter 2 is based on materials presented from primary sources (mainly old newspapers which are located at the National Archive,

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(1) Nketia, K. Op.cit. pp.14-15.

(2) Such works included Oyigiyigi and Kyrie, see Chapter 5, p. 108.

Ibadan) and from secondary sources, that is, published historical books.

In addition, Dr. Samuel Akpabot, one of the most popular Highlife musicians in the 1950s and 1960s in Nigeria provided valuable, oral information on Nigerian Highlife music.

The musical results of the historical events discussed in Chapter 2. are examined in Chapter 4. One important musical product of the revolt in the church was the emergence of church compositions written by Nigerian organists for use during services. Examples of such compositions are studied in Chapter 4 focussing on how they establish important stylistic features which Nigerian composers of Art music would later employ in their own works. The pieces which are studied in this chapter are taken from the works of the most important and popular composers of church music in Nigeria: Dr. T.K. Phillips, the Rev. I.O. Kuti, J. Harcourt Whyte and D. Dedeké. It is the works of these early composer-organists which constitute the first experimental compositions in which there is a conscious attempt to fuse European and Nigerian elements.

Chapter 3 presents a discussion on the characteristic features of African music and serves as a background to the analysis in Chapters 6-11. In Chapter 3, it is argued that although musical differences exist among the various ethnic groups in Africa, there are certain elements which unite them. It is on such unifying elements that Chapter 4 focusses and it is through the use of such unifying elements, often within a largely European context, that the Nigerian composers studied in Chapters 6-11 of this thesis have sought to give their works an African identity.

The analyses of modern Nigerian Art music in Chapters 6-11 concentrate on the works of six composers in the tradition: Fela Sowande, Akin Euba, Samuel Akpabot, Ayo Bankole, Okechuckwu Ndubuisi and the youngest of them, Joshua Uzoigwe. The criteria for selecting these

composers are principally

- i) The need to focus on the most nationally and internationally known composers.
- ii) The need to examine the most popular and important works within the idiom.
- iii) The need to reflect the two important ethnic-cultural background of the composers in the idiom; the Western-Yoruba and the Eastern-Igbo (see map on p. 15). These two ethnic groups are the largest in Southern Nigeria and virtually all the Nigerian composers of Art music have either come from or lived in these two areas. This point will be expanded in Chapter 5. Unlike Southern Nigeria, which is today a predominantly Christian area, the Northern part remains a largely Islamic state. Since modern Nigerian Art music is a bi-product of Christianity, it is not surprising that the North has yet to produce a major composer in the idiom.
- iv) The need to reflect the major categories in the idiom: orchestral works, chamber and piano works, organ works, solo songs and choral works.

Chapter 5 contains an introduction to the lives and works of the six composers. The chapter focusses on their musical background, the major stylistic influences on their works, a general survey of their works and the main compositional objectives which dictate their creative experiments. Much of the material in this chapter is based on interviews which I conducted with the composers, as well as studying their published and unpublished research work. In the case of Fela Sowande and Ayo Bankole, now deceased, I have relied mainly on their publications as well as the information provided by their colleagues and friends, Akin Euba, Samuel Akpabot and

Moloye Bateye. This chapter also serves as a general background to the analysis in Chapters 6-10 in which representative works are examined.

The analyses provided in Chapters 4-10 are based on about 400 written compositions which range from short religious songs to large symphonic and choral works. A list of these works is provided in the Appendix. Since many of these works are unpublished, and considering the fact that many of those which have been published are now out of print, the collection of scores constitutes a major part of the research. Most of the scores were collected from the composers, although two of them, the Folk Symphony and the African Suite, both by Sowande, were obtained from the B.B.C. and Chappell Publishing Company respectively.

It must, however, be stressed that the discussion in the thesis does not represent an exhaustive study of all the works of the selected composers. In selecting works for detailed analysis I have been guided by the need to examine those which are representative of a composer's style as highlighted in the biographical and musical background provided in Chapter 5. The predominant emphasis throughout the study is to examine how African and European elements are fused in the works of these composers. The emphasis emanates from certain important objectives of the thesis:

- i) To examine the impact of the political, socio-cultural and religious changes which have taken place in Nigeria as a result of contact with Europe in the nineteenth century and assess how such changes have provided the basis for the growth of new music idioms in the country.
- ii) To examine how Nigerian composers, reacting to the challenge of European culture, have attempted to synthesise European and African idioms in their works.



- iii) To assess the degree to which these composers have succeeded in reinterpreting elements of traditional Nigerian music in an attempt to give their works an African identity.
- iv) Whereas the analysis of a European composition often assumes that the reader has a cultural understanding of the context in which the work was composed, the same is not necessarily true of a Nigerian composition. Thus one of the functions of the analyses in this thesis is to provide a cultural understanding (which is likely to be different from a European context) and by doing so provide a clearer understanding of the structural and stylistic features of the music.
- v) To help in the provision of a relevant analytical approach which can be employed in studying other works by African composers which have a similar cultural conception to those examined in this thesis.
- vi) To provide more relevant teaching material in Nigerian music schools. The predominant emphasis on the study of European music, which obtains in the Nigerian music curricula at the moment, is untenable. While the study of European music in Nigerian schools and universities should not be discouraged - given the enormous impact of European culture on different aspects of Nigerian society - the development of an academic and educational system which addresses itself to the artistic needs of contemporary Nigeria should be the dominant objective of any music curriculum in the country. One of the ways through which this objective can be met is by examining the works of modern Nigerian composers to see how they have used Nigerian (and European) elements in order to satisfy some of the artistic needs of modern Nigeria.

## CHAPTER TWO

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF MODERN NIGERIAN MUSIC

In Nigeria new, European influenced, musical idioms have emerged since the beginning of this century. These idioms can be classified under four distinct categories: Indigenous Church music, Urban syncretic popular forms, Modern Folk opera and Nigerian Modern Art music. The emergence of these new forms is a result of an historical process which began in the middle of the nineteenth century. Three main factors can be identified to be directly responsible for the growth of these new idioms. These are:

- 1) The emergence of a European-trained, educated, African elite and the consequent creation of a viable atmosphere for the practice and consumption of European music. This atmosphere was vibrantly sustained in the nineteenth century by economic and political factors largely dictated by Europe;
- 2) The eventual frustration by the African elite with their European counterparts. The African elite had hoped for more political and economic power. They were, however, deprived of this by the European colonial administrators in Nigeria. This situation led to:
- 3) A spirit of cultural awakening. The African elite in Nigeria, who initially distanced themselves from the local populace and therefore traditional Nigerian culture, later realised that political and economic independence, if that was to be possible, needed to be preceded by a greater awareness of their own culture.

The greatest challenge to European power took place, naturally, in the Church since it was the most important focal point for the educated Africans in nineteenth century Nigeria. Within the Church itself, African

Christians agitated for missionary policies which were more sympathetic to African customs and beliefs. One of the significant results of this agitation was the emergence, by the beginning of this century, of Nigerian hymnody. In addition to being the bedrock for the growth of modern Nigerian music, the new indigenous church music constituted the most significant artistic symbol of the nineteenth century Nigerian challenge to European hegemony. In the discussion below the main features of this historical process will be highlighted in some details.

#### The Multi-Cultural Setting of Lagos and its Environs

Within the geographical area now defined as Nigeria, European influences were, in the nineteenth century, limited to coastal towns such as Lagos, Abeokuta, Calabar, and regional centres such as Ibadan and Onitsha. The nineteenth century cultural setting of Lagos and its environs, including Abeokuta and Badagry (see map on p. 15) - the area known as the citadel of Christianity in Nigeria - clearly illustrates the nature of the ways in which some Nigerian towns were transformed from their pre-colonial rural setting to a relatively cosmopolitan environment in the later half of the nineteenth century. In addition, nineteenth century European influences were more noticeable in this area than in any other part of the country. As a result the nature and pattern of the development of modern Nigerian music have been largely dictated by the nineteenth century cosmopolitan setting of Lagos and its environs. It is for this reason that the discussion below concentrates mainly on this particular area.

Prior to the middle of the nineteenth century musical activities in Yoruba land (where Lagos is situated) were mainly traditional. Although there had been external influence on Yoruba musical life<sup>(1)</sup> they were

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(1) See Omibiyi M. "Islamic influence on Yoruba music", African Notes Vol. VIII, No. 2, 1981.

MAP OF NIGERIA SHOWING MAJOR TOWNS AND CITIES.



either too minimal, or not different in principle from Yoruba musical tradition, to precipitate a fundamental musical change or initiate a new idiom. It was due, mainly to the arrival of returning ex-slaves from the West Indies and Brazil, and European businessmen, missionaries and colonial administrators that a social vacuum was created for the planting and growth of a new, European, musical idiom. Before the middle of the nineteenth century European contact with Nigeria, which dates back to the fifteenth century, was mainly on a commercial basis. It was not until the introduction of Christian missionary propaganda in Badagry and Old Calabar in 1842 and 1846 respectively that settlers began to arrive from outside Nigeria. Britain had passed an act in 1807 which made it illegal to trade in slaves. In addition it established a squadron whose responsibility was to free any re-captured person found on the shores of Sierra-Leone. About the same time, freed slaves from the West Indies were being settled in Freetown, the capital of Sierra-Leone. Many of these freed slaves were descendants of the Yoruba people of Western Nigeria, and many of these Sierra-Leone emigrants - the Saros as they were called by the native people of Sierra-Leone - chose to go back to their original home, Yoruba land. The British allowed and helped them to do so and by 1850 there were at least three thousand Saros in Badagry, Abeokuta and Lagos.

At about the same time, Christian missionaries were arriving from Europe to spread the Gospel. The Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.), the largest of all such societies, established their first mission in Badagry in 1845 and a year later in Abeokuta. Other missionaries included the Methodists, Badagry, 1842; the Baptists, Ijaye, 1853; the Catholics, Lagos, 1867.

The Christian missionaries now wanted to spread the gospel to other parts of the country. This was only possible within a peaceful atmosphere, which was not the case in Yoruba land, at that time engaged in a series of

inter-ethnic conflicts. The Abomeys, a Yoruba group (in the present day Republic of Benin) were busy invading the Egbas in Abeokuta while two different factions (one led by Akintoye and the other by Dosumu) were struggling for the throne in Lagos. Ostensibly, as a result of these internal wranglings and at the request of the missionaries, the British Foreign Office and Admiralty took over Lagos in 1851. Ten years later a further step was taken by the British in the establishment of the Colonial regime with the acquisition of the colony of Lagos.

Meanwhile, missionary and commercial activities continued to expand with a corresponding rapid transformation of Lagos into a multi-cultural urban society. For example, in 1866 there were at least 1,500 Saros, 1,200 Brazilians and 42 Europeans in Lagos. The local population stood at 25,000. Emigrants (the Saros and the Brazilians) became the initial members of the congregation of the new churches. In addition, while the Saros, with their Sierra-Leonean background of English liberal education were employed as teachers in the Mission Schools and as Civil Servants in the colonial administration; the Brazilians, most of whom were uneducated, were employed as construction workers.

According to Ajayi:

"the missionary movement kept most of them (the Saros and the Brazilians) together in a few focal centres; gave them scope and management. For the Sierra Leoneans they offered commercial opportunities, employment as catechists, evangelists and school masters. For the Brazilians, houses to build, roads to construct and facilities to practice the arts they had acquired.

It was the emigrants who introduced the missionaries into the country and they were an essential and integral part of the missionary movement.<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) Ajayi, J.F.A. Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1891, Longmans: London, 1965, pp.51-52.

As a result of their relative social advantage (compared with their local Yoruba counterparts), the Saros emerged to be the first Nigerian, educated, elite. They were not just part of the missionary movement in the country, they constituted the medium through which European concert music grew in the country. They had been exposed to European music not only in the West Indies but also in Sierra Leone through the Christian faith as well as through education. They developed a taste for European, especially Victorian, concert tradition and theatre music and as will be shown below, they sought to promote it in Nigeria. Their desire was aided and helped by the fact that the new cosmopolitan and social setting of Lagos provided a place for the practice of European as well as European derived musical idioms.

#### Voluntary Bodies and Concert Activities

A significant feature of the new social atmosphere in Lagos was the formation of voluntary Philanthropic Societies who often organised concerts either to raise funds for new church or school buildings or for pure entertainment. Membership of these societies was largely confined to the Saros. Thus names which featured prominently in the activities of these societies include Samuel Ajayi Crowther (who would later become the first African Bishop), J.L. Davis, Robert Campbell, J.O. Payne and Herbert Macaulay. These personalities had been trained by the Church Missionary Society of Freetown and had a solid background of English liberal education with an emphasis on English, study of the Bible and music, before coming to Nigeria. For example, J.L. Davis came from Freetown in 1856 to become the wealthiest trader in Lagos. He, a devoted Anglican, it was, who donated the land on which St. Paul's Church was built in 1872. He had helped to found the Lagos Grammar School in 1859 and the first Lagos Public Library in 1872. His wife was a singer and pianist. Both were members of "The Academy", a cultural and philanthropic society which

organised the first European concert to be held in Lagos. This was in 1861<sup>(1)</sup>. The first president of this society was Robert Campbell, a Jamaican, who later became the richest publisher in Lagos. In 1863 he left the Academy to found "The Anglo-African", a society which promoted a cordial relationship between the British and the African community in Lagos. The society was also helpful in promoting European type concerts.

Another body, "The Philharmonic", was formed in 1873 by J. Otunba Payne. Most of the concerts organised by this society took place in the Philharmonic Hall, later known as the Phoenix Hall.<sup>(2)</sup> Another such musical society was "The Lagos Espirit de Corps" formed in 1876. Its musical director was also J. Otunba Payne.<sup>(3)</sup> The African Times of 1 May 1876 reported one of its most successful concerts. The concert was organised by Lt. Governor Lees to welcome Sir William Hewett, the British Consul in Lagos, who had just returned from a tour of Ekiti land. "All the principal people, native as well as European, were there ..."<sup>(4)</sup>

The Brazilian communities also featured, though less prominently, in the concert activities of nineteenth century Lagos. Although their Catholic and language background kept them away from the Black emigrant community there were occasional references to their concert activities which often attracted a wide audience. The "Brazilian Dramatic Company", which was directed by P.Z. Silvia, was the most important channel for presenting Brazilian organised entertainment in Lagos. One concert organised by this society took place in 1882 to mark the birthday of Queen Victoria.<sup>(5)</sup> In 1884 another society, "The Mechanics Amateur Dramatic Association" was formed. Like the "Brazilian Dramatic Company"

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- (1) L.C. Gwam, Great Nigerians, Lagos Daily Times, n.d. p.40.
  - (2) Lagos Observer, 9 November 1882.
  - (3) African Times, 1 March 1876.
  - (4) African Times, 1 May 1876.
  - (5) Lagos Times, 18 December 1880.



this society was mostly made up of Brazilians. One of its concerts, recorded in the press, was held at the Phoenix Hall in 1884.<sup>(1)</sup>

### Activities of the Church and Mission Schools

Mainly through its Mission Schools the Church complemented the activities of private bodies in the organisation of European musical activities. These Schools also provided training for African musicians who later became the pioneers of indigenous Nigerian Church music. In addition to the use of hymns and liturgies within the Church, performances which featured instrumental and vocal items from the classical tradition often appeared in concerts organised by Mission Schools.

The first of such Schools was Lagos Grammar School which was established in 1859. In 1872, the School formed its own entertainment society. In the same year this society staged a concert in aid of the School harmonium. Musical training and concerts were also emphasised at a Sister School, CMS Female Institute, founded in 1872. Robert Coker, a Saro composer who was popularly referred to as the Mozart of West Africa, maintained a high standard of musical training in the School. The first Nigerian to study music to a professional level, Coker was trained initially at the CMS Institute at Abeokuta before proceeding to England in 1880. He returned to the School - the CMS School, Lagos - to organise annual concerts with the help of another Saro, Dr. Nathaniel King, who was then the choir master at St. John's Church, Aroloya, Lagos.<sup>(2)</sup> He and Coker were the two most influential names associated with School and Mission organised concerts in Lagos towards the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>(3)</sup> The activities of Lagos Grammar School and the CMS Grammar Schools are only a few examples of the prominence attached to musical training in the programme of many of the Secondary Schools in nineteenth century Lagos.

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- (1) Lagos Observer, 19 June 1884.
  - (2) Lagos Observer, 9 November 1882.
  - (3) Lagos Times, 12 October 1881.

## The Concerts

Examples of programmes of concerts shown on pp. 22 - 23 highlight the influence of Victorian England on the musical life of Lagos in the later half of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. Prominently featured in these programmes were songs, vocal duets and quartets, religious story plays and musicals, arrangements of English folk songs and excerpts from cantatas and oratorios, especially by Handel and Mendelssohn. Instrumental performances were generally restricted to those on the harmonium, the piano and the violin, with occasional appearances of the Constabulary bands. Items were often performed along with plays and poetry which show a particular fascination for Shakespeare. As the table also shows traditional Nigerian pieces were rarely performed even though most of the performers were Africans.

Publicity for concerts organised by Schools, Churches and private organisations were usually made through hand-made posters, printed placards on walls, and by word of mouth. Tickets were distributed mainly in Schools and Churches at prices which ranged between two and four shillings (10 and 20 p.). But these fees were beyond what the local population could afford and so only the Saro emigrants could attend. Since it was not until 1890 that Lagos had electricity, candle lights, kerosene gas and palm oil provided a source of lighting.<sup>(1)</sup>

It is necessary to emphasise that although European musical culture flourished considerably in Lagos and other towns like Abeokuta and Badagry it never really penetrated to the local people - that is - the traditional Yorubas. The Saros who organised these concerts existed in a class of their own, separated socially from the indigenous people. As a result,

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(1) See Lynn Leonard : The Growth of Entertainment of Non African Origin in Lagos, M.A. Thesis, Ibadan, 1967, pp.29-33.

FIGURE 1.1 : SAMPLES OF CONCERTS IN LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY LAGOS AS REPORTED IN THE PRESS<sup>(1)</sup>

DATE	VENUE/OCCASION	ORGANISER/PERFORMERS	ITEMS
April 9, 1886	Glover Memorial Fund	Governor Moloney and the Young Abstainers Union	Included: 1) "I'M A MERRY ZINGARA" (a solo song) 2) "THE WISHING CAP" (a piano solo) 3) "CINDERELLA AND THE GLASS SLIPPER" (a pantomime)
July 9, 1886	Phoenix Hall	Patron: T.B. Hoare	Included: 1) "LAUGH WHILE YOU MAY"; 2) "CHIMING BELLS"; 3) "SWEET EVLINA"; "CHARMING WALTZ" (solo songs); 4) "ECOUTEZ-MOI"; 5) "SYMPATHY"; 6) "THE MAIDEN'S PRAYER" (piano solos); and 7) A violin solo from "IL TROVATORE".
October 14 & 15, 1886	Breadfruit School Room	Mr. R. Coker	Included: 1) "COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE"; 2) "SWEET AND LOW"; 3) "SWEET ROSALIE" (solo songs); 4) "VICTORIA" (piano solo) and 5) "JOSEPH" (a cantata).
September 13-14, 1888	Breadfruit School Room	Patron: Mr. Justice Richards, Acting Judge of Lagos Colony	Included: 1) "TRIAL BY JURY" - "GILBERT AND SULLIVAN" 2) A Yoruba song - "EMI KOLE JOKO JE" (sung by Herbert MacAulay).
December 18 1888	Phoenix Hall	Hope School Entertainment. Performers include "THE STRINGED INSTRUMENT CLUB"	Mainly songs including: "CHILLINGOWULLABADONE" and the "HAVANAH SLAVE SONGS"
June 12, 1900	C.M.S. Grammar School. Speech Day	Students	Included a song: "THE UNION JACK" and "THE TRIAL OF ANTONIO" from the "MERCHANT OF VENICE"

FIGURE 1.1 (Continued)

DATE	VENUE/OCCASION	ORGANISER/PERFORMERS	ITEMS
November 23, 1883	St. Peter's School Room	Patron: Lt. Governor W. Brandford Griffith Performers include the Constabulary Band	Included: 1) "THE HALLELUJAH CHORUS" from "HANDELS MESSIAH", and 2) "LOVER AND THE BIRD"; 3) "A.B.C. DUET" (songs).

(1) See bibliography for a list of the Newspapers.

Yoruba musical tradition continued almost totally untouched by imported European music. This situation, which is different from that which obtained in Ibo land,<sup>(1)</sup> continued till the end of the nineteenth century, and it was not until the beginning of this century that syncretic forms began to emerge in Yoruba land. Anthony King explains this phenomenon very clearly. According to him:

"The initial separation of a mission educated elite from the rest of the community (the Yoruba natives) caused a widening division of Christian church music and school music and its teachers from Yoruba music as a whole. This division acted as a barrier behind which Yoruba music as a whole was able to flourish unaffected by the music introduced by the missionaries, the commercial entrepreneurs and finally the colonial administration. In fact it was not the Yoruba musicians who had to come to terms with the music of the invading culture but the musical among the new elite who in time found that they had to adapt to traditional music."<sup>(2)</sup>

It is important to see the origin of modern Nigerian music against the background of the need felt by the nineteenth century Nigerian elite to compose music which (unlike European music which they had hitherto patronised enthusiastically) would be more relevant to Nigerian culture. Since the early training and social experience of these educated Africans have been mainly European in content, and considering the fact that their knowledge of African music was extremely limited, European forms provided the stylistic framework of the immediate attempts to compose Nigerian music. Thus the African elements which are used in their works often exist only on a peripheral level. This stylistic paradigm - the use of African elements within European structural framework - has continued to be the dominant cliché in modern Nigerian music.

Newspaper critics in the nineteenth century often emphasised the need to maintain very high standards of European musical tradition in

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(1) See Chapter 4, p.95.

(2) Anthony King "Nigerian Music" in New Grove Dictionary of Music Vol.13 MacMillan: London, 1980, p.238.

Nigeria. Reviewing a concert in the Lagos Observer of 21st June, 1883, "Cherubino", a regular arts critic of the paper, wrote that "Miss A. Johnson is decidedly a brilliant player though I fancy she was unfortunate in the selection of the piece which was a variation of the "Blue Bells of Scotland". Consisting of long runs, the air being led with the left hand and a lot of fireworks darting from the right, she however was master of her scales". In another review he wrote that:

"those who had experience of musical performances in Europe fully understand the reason why ours in this country is always below par. In Europe, artists are specially trained for their work. They advance from the province to the capitals. They are accustomed to act and sing every night of their lives and therefore gain an ensemble totally unknown in this country."<sup>(1)</sup>

The cordial relationship which existed for most of the nineteenth century among the various cultural groups in Lagos was however not to continue for ever. Towards the end of the century, for political, economic and cultural reasons which are discussed below, the Black community in Lagos began to question the domination of the Europeans. European musical activities suffered in this process and traditional Nigerian music began to find its way into the Church and on to the concert platform.

#### Schisms within the Church and the Genesis of Cultural Nationalism

It was a general belief among the Saros that as time went on there would be greater opportunities for them to occupy senior cadre posts within existing institutions; the Church, Mission Schools and the Civil Service. The reverse was the case. They were also largely deprived of participation in political decisions. In 1872 the local government which was established in 1861 employed the first African representative only after much agitation. In addition, European commercial activities increased in Lagos, especially after it became a colony in 1861, as more

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(1) Lagos Observer, March 2 1882.

French and German businessmen arrived to compete with each other. In 1879 British companies on the Niger were amalgamated to form the United African Company - a stronger body to withstand the competition posed by the French and the Germans. The big European trading companies naturally forced most of the African small-scale traders into bankruptcy.

Within the various Christian denominations tension was beginning to develop in the hitherto cordial relationship between Africans and Europeans. African clergymen were not appointed in sufficient numbers. The few existing ones were not being promoted. European Church leaders wanted natives to abandon some of their traditional customs, such as polygamy and traditional ritual ceremonies. As Ayandele has observed, Africans were taught to "regard traditional customs and institutions with abhorrence ...for the adoption of European culture was an outward sign of the inward transformation from the pagan to the Christian life."<sup>(1)</sup> As a result the Africans began to reassess their relationship with the European authorities. Most significantly, Africans demanded their own Church, which would be sympathetic to traditional culture. In 1881 the first pamphlet advocating for the establishment of an African Church was published.<sup>(2)</sup> Seven years later the Native Baptist Church was formed which became the first Nigerian 'African' Church.<sup>(3)</sup>

According to Webster, "the precedent set in 1888 was repeated in 1891, 1901 and 1917 until every mission in Lagos - the C.M.S., the Wesleyan Church, the Baptist and the Catholic had been chastized."<sup>(4)</sup> Thus the United Native African Church, a breakaway faction from the African Church and the Methodist Church was formed on August 14th, 1891. The United African Methodist Church was founded in 1917 while the African Church

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- (1) Ayandele, E.A. The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, Longmans, London, 1960, p.243.
  - (2) Ibid, p.197.
  - (3) Ibid, p.198.
  - (4) Webster, J.S. The African Churches among the Yorubas, Clarendon Press, London, 1964, p.62.

was founded in 1901 by a breakaway faction of St. Paul's, Breadfruit, Lagos. "The Aladura" Church and the "Seraphim and Cherubim" which epitomise the Africanisation of Christianity in Nigeria were founded in the 1920s and it is in these missions that we find the most direct use of African music within a Christian Church as we shall see in Chapter 4.

One of the most important issues which engaged the attention of the early leaders of the new churches was the extent to which European elements should be retained in the new churches with particular consideration to hymns, liturgy and dogma. Traditional music had been banned in the orthodox churches since it was said to carry paganistic connotations. It had been used only on a few occasions for evangelical purposes. Apart from such few occasions, traditional music was not considered fit to be used during proper services. As Webster has stated when the U.N.A. used it in 1871 during church services, they were "prosecuted in the Courts for profaning a holy edifice. African music was not respectable, associated with the Old rather than the New Africa. Many, especially in Lagos, had lost their ear for it. It was becoming foreign."<sup>(1)</sup>

One of the strongest advocates for the use of hymns based on, or derived from, traditional African music was Mr. Mojola Agbegbi, leader of Native Baptist Church. He actually instructed members of his church in Ekiti land not to use European hymns in the church for seven years to allow traditional music to take its rightful place in Ekiti churches. Agbebi's efforts were complemented by those of A.K. Ajisafe, an outstanding hymnologist, who pioneered the use of native airs in his church, the U.A.M. (Eleja) in 1917. In addition drums were introduced by the Ethiopian and Brotherhood Churches - two small missions established in 1918.<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) Ibid, pp.130-131.

(2) Ibid.



The efforts at incorporating traditional African music into the Christian liturgy acquires greater significance when, in 1918, "The African Church Choir" was established. Its main objective was to improve traditional folk tunes - so that they could be used during church worship. This choir was formed by A.K. Ajisafe with the encouragement and assistance of Aboyade-Cole, then a priest at Bethel African Cathedral in Lagos.

The cultural revival in the church spread to the concert platform. For example, Herbert Macaulay, a man who later became the father of Nigeria's Nationalist Movement for Independence, formed a society known as the "Melodramatic Society". This society promoted traditional music by organising a series of concerts which featured Yoruba music prominently. Also, in 1911, Claude Pratt, one of the outstanding singers of the period, recorded several Yoruba songs on the gramophone.

The cultural re-awakening of the African churches also spread to the orthodox churches whose leaders were initially reluctant to use African music in their churches. Apart from their alleged paganistic character, Yoruba songs were banned because they were "offensive songs" not worthy of being used in holy worship. According to Governor Molony of Lagos, an informed music enthusiast,

"the native character (of the Yoruba people) partakes often of a nature spiteful and revengeful on the occasions of trivial offence and gives rise to many songs of an offensive turn which have necessitated at times in support of public peace, the interference of the Government as to grants of permission to sing or play in public. This is why in Yoruba no attention to setting to music native airs seems to have been given."<sup>(1)</sup>

Despite their alleged offensive and pagan character, African songs were, from the beginning of this century, allowed to be used in the

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(1) Molony, C. Alfred: "On the Melodies of Mandingo, Ewe, Yoruba ... of W/Africa" Journal of the Manchester Geographical Society, 1889, Vol. 5, pp.289-290.

Anglican churches. This is because they continued to lose converts to the new African churches in increasing numbers. Music became the chief means of propaganda among the churches - new and orthodox - a feature which sheds light on the age long importance of music in religious worships in Africa. At St. Jude's Anglican Church in Lagos, Emmanuel Sowande, Father of Fela Sowande, the leading Nigerian-African composer of African modern art music<sup>(1)</sup> and others such as Canon J.J. Kuti (grandfather of Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Nigeria's most popular band leader) were, at the beginning of this century, introducing traditional songs (set to Christian texts) in the church. These were only a few instances of the increasing tendency for European leaders of orthodox churches to allow the use of traditional music in the church. For example, in a letter written by a C.M.S. parish leader, Rev. J. White, to Governor Molony towards the end of the nineteenth century, he states that:

"The Otas (a sub ethnic group among the Yorubas) being reported to be famous native poets and musicians and finding a difficulty to teach the new converts to Christian English tunes, I asked them to compose their own hymns and songs, which they did, subject to my corrections with regard to things unscriptural, and the collection contained in the book is the result. They are used to this day in divine worship. There is nothing like rhyming or metre. The hymns and songs being their own composition, they are intelligibly sung by old and young, and I have no doubt that the use of it has tended to deepen their devotion."<sup>(2)</sup>

Personalities who have, in the first half of this century, emerged to be the greatest champions of indigenous hymnody were T.K. Phillips, A.K. Ajibola, Rev. Ransome-Kuti, G.B. Oriere, Harcourt-Whyte, Okongwu, N. Okoli and Dayo Dedeke. A discussion of the lives and works of some of these composers forms part of Chapter 4.

The increased interest in traditional music was only part of the wind of cultural re-awakening blowing in the nineteenth century. It is

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(1) See pp. 107-118.

(2) Ibid, p.290.

necessary to mention further that the Saros conceded the fact that they knew very little of the African traditional culture which they sought to project. Consequently they realised the need to learn more about, and investigate into, traditional culture. This is clearly seen in the number of research projects into Yoruba Folklore that were begun towards the end of the nineteenth century. These included for example, "Yoruba mythology" by Moses Lijadu in 1896 and "Yoruba Heathenism" by James Johnson in 1899. Institutions which promoted such researches were The West African Psychical Institute established in 1901 and "The Lagos Native Research Society" founded in 1903 under the secretaryship of the Rev. H. Atundaolu.<sup>(1)</sup> Other notable features of this cultural nationalism were the increased use of traditional dresses and the adoption of traditional names by the Saros to replace their original English names. For example, David B. Vincet became Mojola Agbebi, while J.H. Samuel (the man who founded the Lagos Institute in 1901) became Adegboyega Edun.

The cleavage between the African churches and the orthodox churches have been reflected in Yoruba indigenous church music. Thus it is possible to distinguish between characteristic features of the indigenous Yoruba music of the orthodox churches and those of the African churches especially "The Aladura" which have a particularly strong African character.<sup>(2)</sup>

#### The Emergence of Urban Popular Music

Parallel with, and as significant as the syncretic experiments in both the orthodox and indigenous churches in Nigeria is the emergence of a modern, urban, popular idiom usually referred to as Highlife. The concept of Highlife will, however, have to be seen in a wider context than has been suggested in the few studies which discuss the topic.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Ayandele, op. cit. p.241 ff.

(2) See Chapter 4, p.

(3) See for example, Smith E.M. "Popular Music in West Africa" African Music, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1962.

In Nigeria, the concept "Highlife" describes not simply a musical genre but also a musical phenomenon. While it is possible to identify the common stylistic features of "Highlife" music it is also plausible to view the term as a generic label which encompasses and defines different manifestations of the results of the contact between European and African music. As a genre its emergence in the 1950s in Nigeria epitomises an historical process which started in the last half of the nineteenth century. As a phenomenon it symbolises the musical acculturation which has taken place in Nigeria not only within formal institutions and contexts like the church and the Night Club but also in the informal, everyday, musical life of the people. For example, the emergence of European influenced African melodies commonly used in the everyday life of Nigerians, are part of the modern musical phenomenon which "Highlife" defines. It defines in basic terms the nature of the musical syncretism which permeates the entire spectrum of modern Nigerian music : the incorporation of African rhythmic vitality with European derived harmony. Within the history of urban popular music in Nigeria, Highlife as a genre occupies a pivotal historical and musical position. By integrating the rhythmic vitality of African music with European tonal harmonies, by combining traditional Nigerian instruments with European ones, Highlife music stands historically and structurally between the European-style Band music of nineteenth century Nigeria and the Neo-traditional urban, popular Nigerian music which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. Forms such as JuJu music and Apala music with their reduced and negligible emphasis on the use of European tonal harmonic principles and European instruments can be appropriately seen as continuing the Africanisation process which had been initiated in the emergence of Highlife music in the 1950s.<sup>(1)</sup>

As an artistic phenomenon, Highlife music, like Nigerian hymnody, is symbolic of the cultural as well as the political awareness

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(1) For study of JuJu music see Alaja-Browne, A. JuJu music : a Study of its Social History and Style. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Pittsburg, 1985.

which anticipated the nationalistic struggle in Nigeria. It is therefore not "merely the result of mechanised or passive acculturation but a creative, incorporative response to the political impact and cultural challenge of the West".<sup>(1)</sup> In addition, as a genre, it highlights the emergence of a new status for the Nigerian musician. In contrast to the predominantly communal role of traditional musicians, the emergence of Highlife music marks the incorporation of Nigerian music and the musician into the imported, capitalist, cash economy.

In the discussion below, the historical factors which help bring to life the structural and the phenomenal character of "Highlife" will be explored.

The development of Highlife in Nigeria is related to a number of factors which are not mutually exclusive to one another. The most important of these are:

- 1) The establishment of British-style brass bands in the West African coast as early as the 1950's;
- 2) The influence of the hymnal style of the missionary churches;
- 3) The musical activities of the Rifles band formed by slaves freed from the West Indies;
- 4) The importation of European influenced multi-cultural syncretic forms, especially the Rhumba and the Calypso, from the New World to West Africa;
- 5) The fluid political state of the West African coast before the clear emergence of Nations as we know them today, which facilitated an

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(1) Copland, D. "Go to my Town Cape Coast : The Social History of Ghanaian Highlife" in Eight Urban Musical Cultures, Univ. of Illinois Press, 1978, p.97.

inter-regional movement of people including musicians. This movement aided the development of urbanised syncretic forms which functioned as forerunners of the musical genre, Highlife.

As a result of the constant interaction between institutions and peoples of West African colonies the historical development of Highlife in Nigeria is closely linked to the musical events in other colonies, especially the Gold Coast and Freetown.

It has been suggested that the Fanti Coast of South West Ghana is the first region in West Africa where factors which would lead to the emergence of Highlife music were set in motion.<sup>(1)</sup> This area has one of the earliest contacts with Europe in West Africa dating back to 1482 when the Elmina Fort was built by the Portuguese. The existence of an indigenous dance music in this area prior to the arrival of the Portuguese ensured an easy assimilation of European brass bands especially military band music and the popular European songs and ballads played by Regimental Fife Bands. The arrival of freed Brazilian slaves in the 1830s and with them Rhumba and Calypso styles, also helped to consolidate the growth of band music in this area.

According to Coplan the Fante area

"was the first (part of Africa) to develop a purely indigenous Westernised social and economic elite who identified with and assimilated Western cultural values and (even) to varying degrees become hostile to their own native political, social and cultural systems."<sup>(2)</sup>

The cosmopolitan setting of Freetown also provided another important setting for the inter-mixture of music from different cultures. It soon developed into an important commercial centre following the

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- (1) Collins, J. "Ghanaian Highlife" African Arts, Vol. 10, pt. 1, 1976, p.62.
- (2) Coplan, D. "Go to my Town Cape Coast : The Social History of Ghanaian Highlife" in Eight Urban Musical Cultures, University of Illinois Press : Illinois, 1978, p.97.

resettlement of returning slaves from America. Historical sources have identified the existence of a syncretic dance music genre, called the Gumbey, in Freetown. According to Bruce Lee it was played by the coastal people who make use of "imported" African drums from the West Indies in combination with European instruments like flutes and trumpets. This type of music is one of the precursors of Highlife since it has "certain rhythmic similarities to it".<sup>(1)</sup> The cosmopolitan atmosphere in Freetown also favoured the local growth of syncretic forms like Calypso and Rhumba because of the strong cultural links between the city and the New World. Considering the similarities between the structural features of these syncretic forms and the Highlife it is plausible that they provided some of the resources for its emergence.

It was, however, in Ghana that Highlife as it is known today was first played. By the beginning of this century brass bands had spread from the Fante area to other provincial cities and as Copland has noted it eventually became customary for British-style bands to include traditional, especially Akan, melodies in Western 4-part harmony during their evening entertainments. Such arrangements were known as Adaha or the Konkomba and they constituted the antecedent prototypes of Highlife music in Ghana. Bruce King has suggested that the rhythmic character of these bands must have lacked the vitality of Highlife since their instrumentation consisted entirely of brass instruments such as tubas and horns.<sup>(2)</sup>

The early part of this century also witnessed the development of dance orchestras in Ghana which played ballroom music to entertain the new African educated elite. The most notable of such groups was the "Excelsior Orchestra" formed by a group of Ga musicians in 1914.

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(1) Bruce, L. "Introducing the Highlife" Jazz Monthly, July 1969, p. 3.

(2) Ibid, p.4.

Like Ghana and Sierra Leone the existence of regimental bands in Nigeria, especially following the cessation of Lagos in 1861, the transformation of cities like Lagos, Calabar and Onitsha into cosmopolitan urban centres and the rapidly expanding tradition of orthodox and indigenous church music provided the suitable background for the emergence of syncretic forms which anticipated the emergence of Highlife music in the fifties. For example, one such form known as the "konkomba" has been reported to be in existence in Nigeria as early as the 1940s. Characteristic features of this genre were the use of melodies constructed along Calypso lines harmonised with cyclic, repetitive European harmonic progressions, and a syncopated rhythmic character. Musicians who played the konkomba were Israel Nwaba, G.T. Onwuka and Okonkwo Adigwe, all from Igbo land. Instruments were generally restricted to an acoustic guitar, traditional drums, especially the Conga and the Ubaka - Igbo mbira. The social arena within which performances took place were the local palm wine bars which provided recreational facilities for the emerging urban working class. Indeed these "palm wine bar" syncretic forms represented a humble variant of the more sophisticated Night Club in which British-style bands entertained the elite.

One prominent palm wine bar syncretic form in Western Nigeria is known as Agidigbo, a recreational music whose name is derived from that of the instrument (a Yoruba mbira). One of the greatest exponents of this form of music was Adeolu Akinsanya whose band, the Rio Lindo Orchestra - an Agidigbo band, became a household name in Nigeria between 1953 and 1959.

That such syncretic forms abound in Nigeria from the beginning of the century to the 1940s is confirmed by Harcourt Whyte - the father of Igbo church music. His observations also clarify how such forms were often transformed as they move from one geographical region to another. The



generally held view that Ghana is the origin of Modern West African popular music is also reflected in his observation. According to him

"In the early part of the twentieth century about 1915 or a little later, a type of music came from Gold Coast to the Rivers province in Nigeria. It was known as the Asiko. It was brought by the ships crews and passed over to their commander working on the beach. Within a short time the natives started to copy the music of the strangers and almost three years afterwards the music became general among all who live along the coast. About 1920 the music changed into what was known as the Ijaw and was sung and danced for many years by the people of the Rivers province. About 1940 the music passed northward through Southern Nigeria where it changed from Ijaw to Okombo and from Okombo to Abaina. And as it changed the singing and dancing changed with it. Now the difference between the Abaina and the Asiko is so great that if the ships crews who brought it to the Rivers province heard it they would not recognise it as Asiko." (1)

Whyte's observation is based on personal memory and it is not supported by any concrete evidence. Given his own personal involvement in music, especially in new idioms he is generally regarded as one of the authorities on Modern Nigerian music. Most importantly, however, is the fact that his observation supports two main points mentioned earlier: that there was a great deal of inter-regional musical exchanges among the colonial regions of West Africa and that syncretic forms which anticipated the emergence of the Nigerian Highlife genre were common in the country in the first few decades of the century.

There is a cultural reason why there was a rapid rise of urban popular forms in Nigeria, especially in Yoruba land. It was because these people have a flourishing tradition of social and festival dance music. In addition to the use of music within sacred contexts, music is also employed within social situations such as Ikomo (naming) and Igbeyawo (marriage) ceremonies for recreational purposes. Examples of such social

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(1) Harcourt Whyte: "Music in Nigeria" Nigerian Music, 1961, pp.3-4.

dance forms are Etike, Adamo, palongo, kiriboto and Bembe music. The flourishing tradition of Yoruba festival and social music provides a favourable background for the assimilation of European derived popular dance forms. It could therefore be said that the emergence of Highlife music and its allied syncretic forms in Nigeria does not constitute a fundamental musical change - with regard to the social function of music. It only represents a transfer of a musical tradition to a slightly different social-musical context of the "Night Club culture". The association of music with dance, the performer-audience interaction and the use of improvisations and extemporisations, features which characterise the performance contexts of Highlife - are also germane to much of traditional Nigerian music.

By the early 1950s dance bands were already booming in the larger cities of Nigeria like Lagos, Ibadan, Ondo, Onitsha and Calabar. The most popular of such bands was the "Chocolate Dandies Orchestra" in which the present Oba of Lagos, Kabiyesi Oyekan, played. Other notable bands of the period were "The Akpabot Players" led by Sam Akpabot, who later became one of the most prominent composers of Nigerian modern Art music; "The Western Toppers Band" led by King Kendy Adex; "The Good Band" led by Chris Ajilo and "The Triumph Club Band" led by Fela Sowande - now the leading African composer of Modern African Art music. According to Sam Akpabot in an interview with this writer, most of these bands played styles such as the quick steps, waltzes, rhumbas and "the Victor Sylvester cultural sounds". While some of the members of these bands, such as Soji Lijadu (saxophone), Sam Akpabot (trumpet) and Tunde Derby (organ and piano) could read music from staff notation, many such as Bala Miller and Victor Olaiya, who received an honorary doctorate degree in music from the Soviet Union in 1967, could not.

New pieces, therefore, were often learnt by rote or through the use of tonic solfa. In addition, as illustrated in the orchestra of "The West Toppers Band", instruments were generally restricted to European-type ones - the guitars, brass instruments, especially the saxophone, trumpet and trombone, and drums such as the conga and side drum.

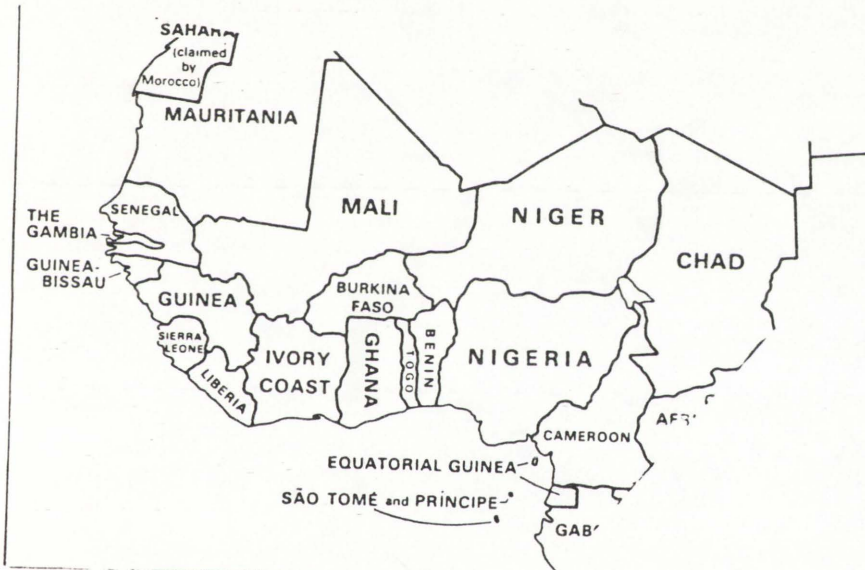
The influence of E.T. Mensah, father of Ghanaian Highlife music, on the development of Nigerian Highlife is significant. The development of Highlife in Ghana is synonymous with the rise of this musician since it was he who first played Highlife music as we know it today. Continuing the experiments of the earlier syncretic forms (such as the konkomba) he forged a distinctive style characterised by a more dynamic rhythmic character and the use of lyrics in Akan or pidgin language. In addition he enlarged the percussion section in his music to include more traditional instruments, especially drums. His earliest records, for example, "Trumpet Highlife", illustrate these characteristic features.

The availability of Mensah's records in Nigeria and, most significantly, his Nigerian tour of the late 1950s had a considerable influence on Nigerian musicians such as Adeolu Akinsanya, Rex Lawson and Victor Olaiya who in the sixties became the pioneers of Nigerian Highlife. In Chapter 3 we shall provide a brief introduction to the lives and the music of some of these musicians to illustrate the prominent features of the Nigerian Highlife musical tradition.

The term Highlife, which originated in Ghana,<sup>(1)</sup> was coined by local people. Gate fees charged for attending concerts or Night Clubs in which such music was performed were normally too exorbitant for the local illiterate or semi-illiterate people. Local people therefore saw such

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(1) See Collins, p.64.

POLITICAL MAP OF WEST AFRICA

social gatherings as symbolic of the social disparity between them and the educated elite who patronised Highlife concerts. While the genre is, on the one hand, an artistic symbol of the nationalistic activities of the Nigerian leaders, it also highlights the social gap between them and the people they sought to lead.

The church often provided a training ground for performers of Highlife music. It was not uncommon to find locally trained organists or ex-choristers becoming prominent Highlife exponents. Apart from the colonial regimental bands it was mainly through the church that European music was introduced to the populace. For example, the basic principles of European tonal harmony, germane to the performance and appreciation of Highlife, are embedded in both orthodox and indigenous Nigerian hymnody. The church provided many of the musicians and has helped to create the audience for the practice and consumption of Highlife. Other media which complemented the role of the church included the new Record industry, the Rediffusion network and the sound tracks of imported films. That the basic harmonic progressions and (sometimes) the homophonic texture associated with protestant hymn tunes are common musical properties of the Highlife<sup>(1)</sup> attest to the importance of the church in the consolidation of the genre in the country; and musicians such as Samuel Akpabot and Tunde Derby, who featured prominently in the Highlife scene of the 50s and 60s, received their initial musical training in the church.

It is also important to mention that some of the most notable composers of Modern Nigerian Art music such as Adam Fiberesisma, Fela Sowande, Samuel Akpabot and Okechuckwu Ndubuisi have at one time or another played Highlife.<sup>(2)</sup> These facts illustrate the link between the different segments of Modern Nigerian music. The Nigerian church music constitutes

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(1) See Chapter 4, p. 100.  
 (2) See Chapter 5, pp.106-145.

the bedrock of the development of Modern Nigerian music - composers of Highlife music and Art music often receive their initial training in the church. In addition, these two genres (Nigerian church music and Highlife) often provide stylistic source materials for the works of composers of Art music - the genre in which the most profound interactions of Nigerian and European elements have taken place. In the next chapter we shall try to isolate the most important and prominent characteristic features of African music. This will provide a background for an assessment of the ways African elements have been incorporated and perpetuated in the European-derived works of Modern Nigerian music later in the thesis.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### AFRICAN IDENTITY IN MUSIC - TOWARDS A DEFINITION

Within the vast continent of Africa are numerous ethnic groups most of which have a distinct way of life. It is therefore generally acceptable to view African musical culture as consisting of many distinct and different traditions. This point should not however be over-emphasised for, while divergencies and differences exist among the various musical groups in Africa, there are features which unite them. For example, it is appropriate to view the divergencies within the tradition of sub-Saharan African music as different manifestations of some important principles which make sub-Saharan African music, as a whole, a distinct stylistic tradition. This point is put very strongly by Nketia<sup>(1)</sup> when he states that:

"a plural concept of African music based on the 'ethnic' group as a homogeneous musical unit can be misleading; for divergencies merely represent areas of musical bias. They are the result of specializations or differences in emphasis on the selection and use of common musical resources, common devices and procedures, specializations which have over the years tended to group African peoples into different communities of taste."

The discussion below focuses on stylistic features which tend to give West-African music a unique and a distinct identity. There are two main reasons why the main point of reference in the discussion is West-Africa. First, our area of study, Nigeria, belongs to that part of Africa. Secondly, it cannot be assumed that stylistic features which unite the music of various West African societies will always appear in the music of other regions of Africa, especially the Arabic part. The discussion will rely extensively on studies by scholars on African music as well as on the experience of this writer who grew up in Yoruba land and has an intimate knowledge of its musical activities. In addition, original examples of African music (mainly Yoruba) which have been transcribed by the writer are used to illustrate certain points.

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(1) Nketia, K. Unity and diversity in African music : a problem of Synthesis (Accra, 1962) p.11 quoted in - OLLY WILSON: "The Significance of the Relationship between Afro-American music and West African music" - The Black perspective in music; Spring 1974, VI.II, part 1, p.4.

The aim of this chapter is to provide a background for the discussions in Chapters 6-11. In those chapters we shall be examining how modern Nigerian composers are consciously re-expressing elements of traditional African music within imported European idioms. Consequently, attention is focused on those features which are of relevance to those discussions rather than on an exhaustive survey of structural features of African traditional music.

### Rhythm in African Music

"Rhythm is to the African what harmony is to the Europeans and it is in the complex interweaving of contrasting rhythmic patterns that he finds his greatest aesthetic satisfaction. To accomplish this he has built up a rhythmic principle which is quite different from that of Western music and yet is present in his simplest songs. His rhythms may be produced by the song itself or by hand clapping or by stick beating ... (although), the highest expression is in drums."<sup>(1)</sup>

This often quoted observation by one of the pioneering authorities on African music is only one of many, by scholars, stressing the importance of rhythm in traditional African music. It is therefore not surprising that the element of rhythm has attracted the attention of scholars more than melody, harmony and form. Prominent characteristic features of African rhythms often highlighted in studies on African music include the use of polyrhythms, syncopations or offbeat phrasing of melodic accents, cross rhythms, multimetre and ostinati (cyclic) patterns.

The use of multi-layered textures in the organisation of African rhythms formed the basis of the observations made by W.E. Ward, one of the earliest writers on African music. According to him, "the difference between African and European rhythms is that whereas any piece of European

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(1) Jones, A.M. "African Rhythm" - Africa Vol. 1, No. 24, 1954, p.26.



music has at any time one rhythm in command, a piece of African music has always two or three, sometimes as many as four".<sup>(1)</sup> In what appears to be a contradiction of this statement Ward goes on to say that within the multi-rhythmic and metric texture of the music one particular metre acts as a regulative pattern. This pattern is, according to him, in a duple metre (usually played by the largest drum in an ensemble) and it helps to establish regular down beats. It could be inferred from Ward's observation that there is "a set of bar lines representing the beginnings (and ends) of units which can be taken to represent metric divisions".<sup>(2)</sup> The contradiction inherent in Ward's observation sheds light on the major problem usually encountered in the interpretation of the principles which govern the organisation of rhythms in African music. This problem invites the question whether regular metre always exists in the conception of rhythmic patterns. We shall be returning to this question later in the discussion. It is however necessary to mention here that Ward's study sheds light on the polyrhythmic texture of African music - a feature which would become the focus of more recent works, as will be seen later in the chapter.

While Ward concentrated on the use of polyrhythms, Hornbostel attempted to provide a theoretical basis for what has been seen as the prevalence of syncopations in the organisation of African rhythms. He (also sharing the view that African rhythm is "ultimately founded on drumming") formulated a theory which considers African drumming as a motor-action in addition to being a sound producing action. According to him, in African drumming:

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(1) Ward, W. "Music in the Gold Coast", Gold Coast Review, III (July-December 1927) p.214, quoted in A.P. Merriam, "Characteristics of African Music" International Folk Music Journal, Vol.XI, 1959, p.13.

(2) Merriam, A.P. Ibid.

"Each single beating movement is two-fold: the muscles are strained and released, the hand is lifted and dropped. Only the second phrase is stressed acoustically, but the first inaudible one has the motor accent as it were which consists in the straining of the muscles. This implies an essential contrast between our (European) rhythmic conception and the Africans'. We proceed from hearing; they from motion; we separate the two phases by a bar line and commence the metrical unit, the bar, with the acoustically stressed time unit; to them, the beginning of the movement, the arsis, is at the same time the beginning of the rhythmical figure, up beats are unknown to them. To us the simple succession of beats  $\gamma \text{ } \text{P}$   $\gamma \text{ } \text{P}$  appears as syncopated because we only attend to its acoustic aspect... In order to write them down adequately we must place the bar line before the rest of the up beat... The elementary form of African  $\frac{3}{4}$  rhythm is not  $\underline{\text{d}} \text{ } \text{ } | \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } |$  but  $\text{ } \text{ } \text{ } | \text{ } \underline{\text{d}} \text{ } |$  (1)

The emphatic point here is that the African musician does not necessarily think of syncopations since both the lifting of the hand and the sounding of the drum constitute a single action. Other writers, like Blacking<sup>(2)</sup> and Kauffman<sup>(3)</sup>, have expressed similar opinions.

Waterman's own explanation of the principle behind the organisation of rhythms in African music is also significant. According to him African musicians are often guided by a "metronome sense" - a learned behaviour which they have developed through the process of enculturation - in the simultaneous use of two or more metric and rhythmic lines.<sup>(4)</sup> The metronome sense is conceptualised as a regular basic framework of beats regularly spaced in line "whether or not these beats are actually struck in percussion or melodic tones." This rather

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(1) Hornbostel, E.V. "African Negro Music", Africa, Vol. 1, 1928, p.53.

(2) Blacking, J. "Some notes on a Theory of African Rhythm advanced by Erich Von Hornbostel" African Music, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1955, pp.12-20.

(3) Kauffman, R. "African Rhythm", Ethnomusicology, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1980, p.395.

(4) Waterman, R. "African influence on the music of the Americas" in Sol Tax (ed.), Acculturation in the Americas (proceedings of the 29th International Congress of Americanists) University of Chicago Press, II, p.12, quoted in Merriam; Op.cit. p.14.

subjective framework of beats functions as a 'liberalising factor' which can help the performer to play other complicated rhythms while at the same time not loosing hold of the basic beats. Not unrelated to the metronome sense is the use of the standard pattern in West African instrumental ensembles. In Yoruba traditional music, this pattern is known as the Konkolo. Characterised by an asymmetric rhythm, the Konkolo also functions as a "liberalising factor" in Yoruba music. We shall return to discuss the use of this pattern among the Yorubas as well as among other West African groups later.

The distinction between the types of rhythms provided by hand-clapping and those played by drum ensembles is the main focus of Jones's studies on African rhythms. According to him "the usual and simplest accompaniment to a song is hand-clapping. So a study of hand-clapping (provides) the best entry into African rhythmic technique".<sup>(1)</sup> He continues that hand-clapping is, usually, "an inexorable and mathematical background to a song".<sup>(2)</sup> The rhythms produced by hand-clapping indicate neither stress nor suggest metric patterns. Rather they "are always absolutely and inexorably accurate in their line"<sup>(3)</sup> not giving way to the exigencies of melody. Thus, hand-claps provide only regular, metronomic divisions. They do not suggest any metric sequence since they are of equal intensity and can start anywhere within the temporal span of the song.

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(1) Jones; Ibid, p.27.

(2) Jones; Ibid, p.28.

(3) Jones; Ibid, p.27.

The rhythmic organisation within a drum ensemble is however more complex since it is conceived in different layers of conflicting beat divisions which never coincide. Jones continues that instead of trying to hear a regulative metric line which binds all the rhythmic patterns together (as suggested by Ward) the polyrhythmic textures of African drum ensembles should be heard as consisting of independently conceived lines. Jones's concept of "staggered entries of phrases" emphasises this independence since individual lines within a polyrhythmic texture can enter or withdraw at irregular intervals of time. Although there is no regulative metric pattern, he identifies a standard pattern which could be used as a reference time-line by individual players in an ensemble. This pattern (Ex 1a), usually played by the gong player, does not provide any metric sequence. This is because as a cyclic pattern, it can start at any point in its sequence as shown in Ex 1b<sup>(1)</sup> In addition its division into two units of seven and five quavers emphasises its ametric tendency. The widespread use of this pattern in many cultures of Africa underlines its importance and has provided the most significant means for a clearer understanding of the criteria for organising rhythms in many African ensembles.

Anthony King provides one of the notable demonstrations of its use. Working on the Ekiti-Yoruba dundun ensemble (which consists of three drums - Iya-ilu, Aguda and Kanango) he observes that while the rhythmic patterns played by Aguda and (especially) Iya-ilu undergo continuous variations, the Kanango (the highest pitched drum in the ensemble) always reiterates an assymetric pattern - the standard pattern. There are no variations of pitch within this pattern (which in King's transcription remained on A<sup>b</sup> - 414 v.p.s.). King suggests two particular reasons for the use of this pattern:

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(1) Music examples in this and other chapters are provided in the second volume

- 1) "Its length being 12 quavers it allows combination with phrases two, three, four or six in length.
- 2) When played in combination with other rhythmic phrases as suggested above its irregular division (seven and five units) ensures that there will always be a fair amount of cross rhythm."

He concludes that the standard pattern supplies a rhythmic bond within a drum ensemble which functions

"not by a precise definition of the main beats of other drums ... but by the provision of a rhythmic background against which other parts may so fit their patterns that an interesting resultant emerges."<sup>(1)</sup>

The standard pattern is characterised by an important germinal element - the juxtaposition of duple and triple rhythmic figurations. This element is prevalently used in African music and it is the basis of Rose Brandel's<sup>(2)</sup> concept of African hemiola. Since this concept focuses on both the linear and vertical juxtapositions of duple and triple figurations it provides the basis for understanding the nature of the relationships between independent strands within a polyrhythmic texture as well as the asymmetric patterning often inherent in each melo-rhythmic line.

Since some of the best illustrations of the polyrhythmic textures of West African music are provided in traditional drum ensembles, it is to these ensembles that we should look for a better understanding of the most important features of West African rhythmic organisations. Scholars, increasingly aware of this, have in recent times been carrying out detailed and extensive studies of such ensembles. Some of them by virtue of being African themselves, and thus having the unique advantage of being

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- (1) King, A. "Employment of the 'standard pattern' in Yoruba Music", African Music, Vol. 2, part 3, 1960, p.52.
  - (2) Brandel, R. "Africa" Harvard Dictionary of Music, 2nd edition, Harvard University Press, 1960, pp.17-24.

participants as well as investigators, have provided new insights into the nature of African rhythms. Before making a summary of the most important features of African rhythm it is necessary to examine the nature of these ensembles as revealed in a few of the studies.

One of the most important characteristics of the rhythms played by traditional ensembles is that they are often sound abstractions of certain underlying texts. In other words, rather than being absolute musical sounds they evoke social-musical meanings which may be verbalised by the performers. As Armstrong has noted, "the general principle which underlies the 'talk' of the various instruments in Africa is quite generally and quite correctly understood to lie in the tonal quality of the languages. The instruments reproduce the tones, stresses and number of syllables in the utterances ... What the instruments transmit, therefore, is not usually a code or a cipher but rather an abstraction from the total speech utterance."<sup>(1)</sup> Thus, as in ukom music "musical sound patterns (may be) perceived by the players at a non-verbal level; but evoke meanings which the players sometimes verbalize through vocal singing."<sup>(2)</sup>

African rhythms, because they often imitate or reflect the inflections of speech, are (as in Yoruba music) often conceived as melodic patterns. While there has been a prevailing emphasis on their percussive character "the audio-mental perception which is really the operative essential for in culture appreciation would recognise them as possessing a rudimentary melo-rhythmic essence".<sup>(3)</sup> In order to stress their melodic qualities the term melo-rhythm has been frequently applied to describe African rhythms.<sup>(4)</sup>

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- (1) Armstrong, R.G. "Talking Drums in the Benue - Cross River region of Nigeria", Phylon, Vol. XV, December 1954, p.355.
  - (2) Uzoigwe, J. Compositional Techniques in Ukom music Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation. Queen's University of Belfast, 1979, p.282.
  - (3) Nzewi, M. "Melo-rhythmic Essence in African Instrumental Music" Black Perspective in Music, Vol. 9, 1982, p.32.
  - (4) Ibid.

In addition to their melo-rhythmic qualities, the organisation of these traditional ensembles is characterised by a hierarchical arrangement of instruments and therefore rhythmic phrases. For example, in Yoruba, Dundun music - drums are conceived in two sections (often referred to as primary and secondary). The first consists of three instruments - Omele Ako, Omele abo, Kerikeri, which usually play repetitive rhythmic figurations. The second section consists of the Iya-ilu which plays parts that generally change more frequently. As Ex 2 shows, prominent among the rhythmic patterns in the first category is a variant of the standard pattern played by the Omele Ako. In the second category the patterns played by the Iya-ilu (the master drum) are more varied. Other studies which highlight similar features in different examples of West African ensembles include those by Euba, (Yoruba-dundun)<sup>(1)</sup>, Olaniyan (dundun - Sekere)<sup>(2)</sup>, Koetting (Ashanti-Kete)<sup>(3)</sup> and this writer (Kiriboto-Yoroba)<sup>(4)</sup>. Koetting's study is significant in that it uses a new notational system for the patterns played by the drums. One feature of this system is that it helps to emphasise the non-metric conception of the rhythmic patterns as well as reducing the influence of Western musical values (inherent in the use of European notation) which often lead to misconceptions of African music. According to Koetting such misconceptions are unavoidable since:

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- (1) Euba, A. "Ilu Esu (Drumming for Esu) : Analysis of a Dundun Performance" in Essays for a Humanist - an offering to Klaus Wachsmann, New York: 1977, pp.121-145.
  - (2) Olaniyan, O. Compositional and Performance Technique in Yoruba Dundun-Sekere Music, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Queens University, Belfast, 1984.
  - (3) Koetting, J. "Analysis and Notation of West African Drum Ensemble Music" Selected Reports of the UCLA Institute of Ethnomusicology, 1, 3, pp.115-146.
  - (4) Omojola, O. Kiriboto Music in Oyo Town, unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Ibadan, 1983.

"the notation developed in the context of the Western music tradition shares particularly highly analytical and precise structures common across most pieces in the tradition and will tend to transmit these structures to the drum ensemble music."<sup>(1)</sup>

The advantages of the notation system referred to as Time Unit Box System (TUBS), see Ex 3, include:

- a) "its emphasis that in the drum ensemble music precise durational control is not an important issue
- b) its giving a clearer picture of sequential temporal relations within and among patterns than do the notes and rests of varying precise duration used in Western notation".

and most importantly in its avoidance of

"the signatures and bar lines of Western notation, which mislay rhythmic emphasis into gross beats and which translate the drum ensemble patterns into particular metrical measures with an inherent stress structure.

Koetting continues that

even without these the manner in which Western notation groups notes together with joining flags and writes notes and rests of varying duration implies a stress structure or at least an ordering of rhythmic sequence according to some organisational principle however ambiguous.

He concludes that

The fastest pulse should not be confused with metre - there is no inherent hierarchy of stress or accent in the sequence of fastest pulses (thus in his use of the TUBS) "no one box is more significant than another".<sup>(2)</sup>

Koetting's study highlights a problem which confronts many studies on traditional African music - the tendency to view the music from the

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(1) Koetting, J. Op. cit. p.125.

(2) Ibid; p.127.



perspective of European music. A proper understanding of African music can only be achieved if one approaches the music from the cultural perspective from which it is derived. A particular structural pattern may have an outward similarity to another one from a different culture but the cultural background concepts of the two patterns may be fundamentally opposed to each other. With regard to the organisation of rhythm in many examples of West African ensembles, Koetting's study could be seen as a landmark in its being able to emphasise their ametric, cyclic features in addition to giving a better picture of the nature of their durational patterns. The study corroborates, in more convincing terms, the observations of older scholars like Jones, Waterman and King.

On the basis of the discussions above, the following conclusions can be made as to the nature of African rhythmic procedures. These conclusions are not exhaustive of all the characteristics of African rhythms. They only represent some of the most striking features.

- i) African rhythmic structures (especially those produced in instrumental ensembles) are usually characterised by a highly stratified texture arising from the combination of horizontal lines which have conflicting patterns and sequences. While it is possible to identify metric sequences in one or more of the horizontal lines, the cross-rhythmic relationships between them may de-emphasise the existence of a regulative, binding metric pattern for all of them.
- ii) In many of such polyrhythmic instrumental music variants of the "standard pattern", which often recur, function as the regulative pattern. The assymetric nature of this pattern and the fact that it could start from any point in its sequence make it function less as a metric line than as a time line - a "regulative delimiter" often verbalised in traditional African languages (the Okele-Igbo and the Konkolo-Yoruba).

- iii) While instances of syncopations can be heard in simple African rhythms - e.g. those of a song, the importance of the concept (of syncopation) becomes considerably marginalised in a polyrhythmic structure where there is no binding metric sequence. The concept of syncopation refers to instances of rhythmic deviation from a metric norm and can therefore not adequately explain instances where there is a lack of a recognizable binding and pervasive metric pulse as is often found in the rhythm produced in traditional ensembles.
- iv) In African music there is the prevalent use of hemiola patterns occurring in both vertical and horizontal dimensions. The term 'additive rhythm' has been used to describe horizontal occurrences of such patterns. In addition the general view that African rhythms are full of syncopations derives from the attempt to interpret African rhythms from a European point of view, that is, the "temptation to view the African additiveness in relation to European divisiveness".
- v) As in Yoruba music, instrumental rhythmic patterns often constitute abstractions of texts. The rhythms as well as the inflections of speech may dictate tonal and rhythmic features of instrumental patterns. In addition the melodic and rhythmic features of songs often reflect those of the text.
- vi) Inherent rhythms may be heard from the combinations of different horizontal rhythmic lines. These are rhythms not necessarily played by any of the participating instruments of an ensemble but which emerge through the interaction of different rhythmic patterns.

Most of the characteristic features of African rhythms highlighted above tend to emphasise its multi-layered density - a feature which sheds light on the nature of the more fundamental issue of the African time sense. Kauffman's principle of the "multi-chronometry" element of the African time sense is an attempt to locate an important extra musical

cultural basis for the complex nature of African rhythmic procedures.

Since "an adequate understanding of the temporal nature of music making in any society ... should at least take into consideration the total time span in which music occurs ... an all encompassing view of rhythm includes the possibility of looking at the influence of a culture's time sense upon all aspects of its musical time."<sup>(1)</sup> The time sense of a culture - the macro rhythm - thus provides a cultural background for understanding musical elements - such as metre, rhythm - which constitute the micro-rhythm. For example as Kauffman observes, fundamental differences exist between the Indian time sense which allows Indian Ragas to be developed for several hours and that of the Javanese which often predetermine the length of a musical work. Citing the views of Leopold Senghor to reinforce his points, Kauffman rightly concludes that "the ease with which more than one rhythm is performed simultaneously by Africans suggests the possibility that the concept of multi-chronometry is crucial to the African time sense".<sup>(2)</sup>

### Melodic Procedures

Opinions on the nature of African melodies are varied. They include such diverse views as Jones's theory of conjunct fourths,<sup>(3)</sup> Phillips's assertion that all Yoruba melodies make use of the pentatonic scale,<sup>(4)</sup> the prevalent use of diatonic scales as suggested by Ward,<sup>(5)</sup> Tracey<sup>(6)</sup> and Waterman<sup>(7)</sup>, the prevalence of descending scales (Ekwe<sup>(8)</sup>

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- (1) Robert Kauffman; Op.cit. p.400.
  - (2) Robert Kauffman; Op.cit. p.402.
  - (3) Jones, A.M. Studies in "African Music in Northern Rhodesia and some other places" (Lusaka) Rhodes - Livingstone Museum occasional papers 4.
  - (4) Phillips, T.K.E. Yoruba Music; African Music Society, Johannesburg, 1953.
  - (5) Ward, W.E.; Op.cit. p.4.
  - (6) Tracey, H. "Measuring African Scales" African Music Society Journal Vol. 4, part 3, 1959, pp.73-77.
  - (7) Waterman, R. Op.cit.
  - (8) Ekwe, L. "Analysis and Analytical Techniques in African Music - A Theory of Melodic Scales" African Music, Vol. 6, part 1, 1980.

and Jones<sup>(1)</sup>), the preponderance of pendular melodic movements (Ifionu<sup>(2)</sup>) and the use of a variety of scales (including anhemitonic and hemitonic ones) as observed by Nketia<sup>(3)</sup>.

The polarised nature of these views emphasises the point that melodic procedures in African music often change from one sub culture to another. In examining the characteristic features of African melodies we shall therefore concentrate only on some of the striking features.

The general absence of modulations in African melodic procedures and the use of a variety of modes or scales (even within a single society) are central to the observations of Tracey. According to him even "though several instrumental and vocal modes may be found to exist within one community the totality of pitches used in these modes as far as we know are never assembled and combined on a single instrument in one sequence". There is therefore no possibility for the occurrence of modulations (as we know it in conventional European music) in African music but only "a change of mode using a different note pitch as a starting point or tonic within essentially the same mode."<sup>(4)</sup>

The same observations have been made by Nketia who, in addition to identifying the use of a variety of scales in African music, states that the ordering of and the hierarchical relationships within constituent pitches of African scales vary and often change. Thus within a pentatonic scale for example, any of the pitches could function as the modal centre; and he continues:

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- (1) Jones, A. Op.cit. p.11.
  - (2) Ifionu, A. OFO - A Study of an Igbo Vocal Genre, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of London (SOAS), 1979, p.
  - (3) Nketia, J.H. The Music of Africa; London: 1979, pp.147-159.
  - (4) Tracey, H. Op.cit. p. 74.

"although the songs of an African society share a common structural framework they may vary in the emphasis they give to particular tones in certain positions or to particular sequences of intervals. These differences in emphasis are achieved partly through the choice of progressions and partly through the way in which phrases are ordered."(1)

Another important feature of African melodies is their tendency to have a downward contour movement. According to Jones "the tendency is for the (African tune) to start high and gradually to work downwards".(2) In addition, as Ekweme has observed in Igbo music, as a result of the downward movement of African tunes, descending intervals are much more common than ascending ones. Ekweme continues that "larger intervals occur less frequently in these songs. When they do however, they occur in ascending rather than descending patterns".(3) Since such intervallic leaps often occur between different phrases within a song they should not be viewed as melodic intervals but as "interval dividing sections". Ekweme also concludes that generally the range of African melodies does not extend beyond that of a tenth with many having a span of less than an octave.

The use of microtonal intervals as well as the close interaction between speech and music - features which are also characteristic of African melodies - have also been observed by Ekweme who states that:

"in many cases a neutral interval occurs. Also because speech and music are very closely related in African music a tone may very easily switch from music to spoken words of indefinite pitch; a tune may be decorated with slides, glissando and other forms of note bending which may tend to obscure the intonations."(4)

As have been suggested by many writers, the use of microtonal pitch

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(1) Nketia, Op.cit. p.153.

(2) Jones, A. Op.cit. p.11.

(3) Ekweme, L. "Concepts of African Musical Theory" Journal of Black Studies, Vol. 5, 1974, p.48.

(4) Ekweme, Ibid, p.52.

notes or neutral intervals or blurred textures in African music has been identified to be the origin of the use of the 'Blue note' in American Jazz music. According to Gridley and Rave:

"It is probable that when Africans performed European style music they used their own pitch system and the resulting sounds were as if they were playing in the cracks between the piano keys - that is where the 'blue notes' would lie if the piano could produce finer gradations of pitch than it does... The blue note does not reflect a compromise between European and West African systems of tuning as it reflects the practice<sup>(1)</sup> of West African musicians to bend the pitches of their tones."

A more fundamental examination of African melodic principles will however have to go beyond counting how many notes are employed in a song. It will have to look at the relationship within, and the functioning of, notes in a musical piece. Central to the issue of hierarchy in melodies is the identification of 'notes of repose' or tonal/modal centre.

Mensah<sup>(2)</sup> suggests four important features which can help in the determination of tonal or modal centres in African music. These are:

- i) The most customary final or terminal note;
- ii) The note with the heaviest weighting among aggregates of durational values in a melody;
- iii) The highest or lowest or central note - whichever appears to be the most determining in the melody, and
- iv) The note occurring most at stressed points.

An examination of Yoruba songs clearly validates these observations. Thus the establishment of the note of repose in Ex 5 satisfied all but no iii of the conditions suggested by Mensah. It is however possible that a note which

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(1) Gridley and Rave; "Toward Identification of African Traits in Early Jazz", Journal of Black Studies, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1982.

(2) Mensah, A. "Creative Construction in African Music", unpublished manuscript, p.51.

does not occur as a terminal pitch is established as a note of repose relying mainly on its frequent appearances within a song. The appearance of a note other than that which functions as a note of repose as a terminal pitch of a song (see Ex 6) often has a linguistic basis as will be explained later. The establishment of a note of repose in a song through its frequent occurrences has also been observed in Igbo vocal music by Ifionu.<sup>(1)</sup>

Another important element of African melodies is the nature of their relationship with indigenous texts. Quite often, African melodies rely on the rhythm and inflection of their texts for their rhythmic and tonal qualities. Many African languages are tonal, that is, both the toneme and the morpheme are equally important in conveying and determining the meanings of words. As a result of this and because African melodies are often composed to retain the tonal inflections of language, melodic patterns are often determined by the tonal inflections of texts (Ex 4). As will be seen in Chapters 9 and 10, one of the most significant ways through which contemporary Nigerian composers maintain a link with traditional African music is by retaining in their works the relationship between linguistic patterns of indigenous languages and melodic contour as they are usually found in traditional contexts. The discussion below will elucidate some of the different levels of interaction between linguistic features and musical patterns in traditional African music.

#### Text and Tone Relationship

Commenting on the relationship between text and melody in Yoruba music, Sowande states that:

"1) the music must rise and fall in the same way as the voices rise and fall when the words are spoken. This

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(1) Ifionu, op. cit.

may be called inflectional correspondence between words and tune.

- 2) The correct musical intervals must be observed for each word. But the tonal interval of a Yoruba word is not a precise musical interval; it is approximate. Hence each word has what we may call an "interval period" within which it retains the same meaning. Musical intervals are eventually determined by musical context."<sup>(1)</sup>

As noted in the observations above, although the contour of speech often influences that of a melody, it does not often determine its actual notes. Welch, in a study on Yoruba praise music, also emphasises this point. Although the "performer is inherently aware that a disregard for speech tone will alter the meaning of the words, within the limits of tone there are still adequate chances for creativity. For example, the tonal structure may be transposed up or down as long as the tone patterns of the words remain constant."<sup>(2)</sup> Other studies in which similar opinions have been expressed include those by Hornbostel<sup>(3)</sup>, Schneider<sup>(4)</sup>, Tatar<sup>(5)</sup>, Fiagbedzi<sup>(6)</sup> and Ekweme<sup>(7)</sup>.

It is however not in all cases that text and tone maintain a parallel contour, even in musical cultures which have a tonal language, like Yoruba, Igbo and Ewe (see Hornbostel<sup>(8)</sup>, Fiagbedzi<sup>(9)</sup> and Agawu<sup>(10)</sup>). The question

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- (1) Sowande, F. "The Catholic Church and the Tone Language of Nigeria" - unpublished article, p. 42.
  - (2) Welch, D. "Ritual Intonation of Yoruba Praise - Poetry (Oriki)" in 1973 Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council, p.156.
  - (3) Hornbostel, op.cit. p.58.
  - (4) Schneider, M. "Tone and Tune in West African Music" Ethnomusicology, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1961, pp.204-215.
  - (5) Tatar, E. "The Defining Criteria of Anlo-Ewe Vocal Style", M.A. Thesis, UCLA, 1973.
  - (6) Fiagbedzi, N. The Music of the Anlo, PhD Diss., UCLA, 1977.
  - (7) Ekweme, L.E. "African Music in Christian Liturgy : The Igbo Experiment" African Music, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp.12-33.
  - (8) Hornbostel; op.cit.
  - (9) Fiagbedzi; op.cit.
  - (10) Agawu, V. "The impact of Language on Musical Composition in Ghana : An introduction to the music of E. Amu", Ethnomusicology, Jan. 84.



that needs to be asked is how far should linguistic factors be considered in the study of African melodies since some studies have actually suggested that the operations of certain linguistic features in songs take place within the constraints of purely musical considerations. For example Fiagbedzi states that:

"both parallelism and non-correspondence of speech tone with musical tone are mutually related functions of melodic behaviour. From this perspective non-correspondence is neither a deviation from a theoretical mean melodic centre whether horizontal or in the form of waves nor is it embedded as an axis in abstractions of tonal heirarchy. Both are rather incidental to melodic behaviour and are equally the result of melodic organisation and not its generative principles... Artistic juxtapositions of symmetry and contrasts is of itself an efficient framework for organising melody and ... such a framework does not require speech tone sequence as a basis of melodic organisation."<sup>(1)</sup>

However, judging from examples of Yoruba traditional vocal music, there is a danger, in the observation above, of underestimating the influences of linguistic factors on melodic patterns since it is not often the case that the correspondence between text and tone is merely incidental to melodic character. For example, in Yoruba music three types of interaction can be observed. These are:

- 1) instances in which considerations of language and melody tend to co-dominate;
- 2) instances in which linguistic demands are often abandoned as a result of constraints of musical criteria; and
- 3) instances in which musical considerations are almost completely subservient to linguistic demands.

The operation of the three categories of relationship can be observed in Exx. 7, 8 and 9.

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(1) Fiagbedzi, op.cit. p.249.

In Ex. 7 linguistic contour and melodic contour follow the same pattern. The determination of actual melodic intervals are however conditioned by purely musical reasons, the most important of which are:

- i) the pre-eminence of the interval of a fourth (perfect and neutral) as a unifying element;
- ii) the periodic and cadential emphasis on the note A as the note of repose; and,
- iii) the emphasis and the establishment of the note G as the "leading note" to the note of repose.

Thus, in this example, musical criteria and linguistic considerations co-dominate.

In Ex. 8 melodic patterns sometimes negate the inflectionary patterns of text. For example, while the linguistic contour of the text Olukuluku is reflected in motif x of bar 1 it is not in motif y of bar 5. Likewise, although the musical contour of bar 13 corresponds with the general linguistic pattern of the word Olurombi, it (that is the musical contour) does not adequately reflect the syllabic relationships within the word. As in bar 9 the syllables Lu-ro and bi customarily occur on the same tonal level in ordinary speech. The musical setting in bar 13 does not reflect this. With regard to the first observation above, the reason for the change in bar 5 is that an attempt to reflect the melodic contour of the word Olukuluku (as in bar 1) would have resulted in the use of the pitch note C which is foreign to the pentatonic scale of the song. As for the second observation, there are two mutually related reasons for the non-correspondence between melodic pattern and the inflection of text. Firstly, the descent of a perfect 4th has a cadential function since it forms part of the approach to the note of repose - G. Secondly, that descent

helps to effect the archetypal contour of Yoruba melodies - the tendency to start high and fall towards the end.

In Ex. 9 the melodic contour constitutes an exact replica of the linguistic contour. In addition, because melodic patterns generally retain as much as possible the exact intervallic feature of linguistic patterns, the song approaches an exclaimed speech. In the song there is no convincing modal procedure : no note functions as a convincing modal centre; melodic pitches are very varied - they are not easily assignable to a particular scale or mode - and, lastly, rhythmic motion is generally free. It is in such examples as this that musical logic seems to be overshadowed by linguistic considerations in Yoruba songs.

One important point emerges from the above discussion. African vocal music (or any type of vocal music for that matter - e.g. European or Indian) presents, simultaneously, two different modes of communication - language and melody (music) - which operate in different ways: speech names what we distinguish, while music does not. Music is a semiotic system in which a level of meaning resides in the relationship which exists among the signs. This "endosemantic" quality also exists in language (the interdependence of subject - action, action - object) but enriched by lexical references. Thus language, unlike music, "lexicalises its endosemantic relations". When, as in many examples of African traditional music, melodic patterns mirror the features of the "phonological stratum" of language (that is speech rhythm and speech inflection) music itself assumes a quasi-referential status. On the other hand if melodic patterns do not reflect the phonological character of words to which they are set, they (i.e. words) acquire a quasi-musical status by means of "syntagmatic equivalences"<sup>(1)</sup>. We can

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(1) Hill, C.A. and Podstarvsky, S. "The Interfacing of language and music in Hausa praise-singing" Ethnomusicology, Vol. 20, part 3, September 1976, pp.535-540.

therefore say that communication in traditional African vocal music often takes place within the different categories of interaction between text and tone. This interaction is defined as a "linguo-musical discourse" by Clifford Alden Hill and Sviataslov Podstavsky forming the premise on which their study of Hausa (Nigerian) praise singing is based.<sup>(1)</sup>

As in Hausa music, linguistic features are also often reflected in the generation of melodic patterns in Venda (South African) vocal music. Although melodies are, in Venda music, composed within wider contexts of harmonic progressions and shifting tonality,<sup>(2)</sup> cultural situations do "suggest word-phrases whose rhythms and speech tone patterns generate and influence patterns of melody".<sup>(3)</sup> Thus words "do often influence the structure of melodies in a purely formal sense because of the control of speech tone over the formation of the opening phrases of songs and of parts of each subsequent verse".<sup>(4)</sup> Also, the general tendency for African melodies to start high and gradually fall, as exemplified in Igbo vocal music, could have a linguistic basis. As Ekweme explains:

"When the initial syllable of the first word or phrase is a high tone the melody starts with the highest note in the whole tune. Although the melody may at several points during the course of the song rise to this initial note rarely will it go higher than this note within that musical phrase. However, when the initial syllable is a low tone, the melody does not start at the highest point but follows the tonal inflexion of the words to rise to the first high tone syllable in the word or phrase, this then becomes the highest note in the musical phrase if not in the whole song."<sup>(5)</sup>

Linguistic factors also often influence other melodic features such as phrasings and position of accents. For example in Igbo<sup>(6)</sup> as well as

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- (1) Ibid.
  - (2) Blacking, J. "Tonal organisation in the music of two Venda Initiation Schools", Ethnomusicology, Vol. 14, 1970, p.11.
  - (3) Ibid.
  - (4) Ibid.
  - (5) Ekweme, L.E. "Linguistic determinants of some Igbo musical properties" Presented at the N.E. Chapter of the Society for Ethnomusicology, Oneonta, New York, 1973.
  - (6) Ibid.

Yoruba<sup>(1)</sup> music one syllable is usually set to one musical note, while Hausa music is rhythmically dependent on the syllabic tones and quantities of text sung or declaimed in vocal music or unverbilized in instrumental pieces<sup>(2)</sup>. As a result of these factors, melodic phrases often correspond to language phrases as Ex. 10 illustrates. In addition, linguistic features such as vowel assimilation or elision often influence tonal-melodic behaviour. For example, in Yoruba music, if two vowels are (in ordinary speech) on the same tonal level; the vowel resulting from their elision will still remain on that pitch. If however there is a difference of pitch between the two vowels the elision resulting from them will be pronounced with a rising or falling intonation as Ex. 11 illustrates. Ifionu has also observed similar features in Igbo vocal music.<sup>(3)</sup>

The following points have been highlighted in the above discussion:

- a) African melodies have the tendency to start high and gradually fall. In addition they are often characterised by a small ambit. In Yoruba and Igbo music linguistic factors are often responsible for these two features.
- b) Although there are instances to the contrary, melodic patterns often reflect the contours of words in both vocal and instrumental music. However, even when linguistic patterns dictate melodic movement, musical logic is not often completely quelled.
- c) While scales such as the pentatonic and the heptatonic may be prominent in some societies (for example Igbo and Yoruba), a variety of modes is often used in many societies. In Yoruba music, the use

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(1) See Sowande, op. cit. p.32.

(2) King, A. "Nigerian Music" entry in Groves dictionary of music, Op.cit. p.237.

(3) Ifionu, A. op. cit.

of a variety of scales is not unrelated to its oral basis as well as the influence of linguistic considerations.

- d) Melodic patterns often have strong rhythmic accents. In Yoruba music for example, the importance of a percussive texture is often manifested in the conception of vocal melodies.
- e) Melodic phrases are often short, fragmentary and irregular. The influence of linguistic factors on melodic rhythm and contour could be responsible for the first two while the prominence of metric freedom (in addition to linguistic factors) could result in irregular phrasing.
- f) Functional modality exists in African music since, through a host of features such as cadential patterns and duration of tones, modal centres can be identified in songs. Tones which function as modal centres are not always the lowest note within a scale as in European diatonic music. For example, in Yoruba vocal music, it is common to find the second degree functioning as a note of repose as illustrated in Ex. 12.

#### Harmonic Procedures

While some writers do not believe that harmonies exist in African music, others admit their existence even though harmony may be based on different principles when compared with European music. For example, Merriam argues that the concept of harmony is essentially European and does not exist in the musical thoughts of traditional African musicians<sup>(1)</sup>. Hornbostel identifies instances of vertical combinations of pitches in African music but goes on to say that they are incidental and they are not

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(1) Merriam, A.P. "Characteristics of African Music" International Folk Music Journal, Vol. XI, 1959, p.17.

based on any harmonic principle. He described the vertical combinations which result from over-lapping call and response patterns as a "dichord" which may involve intervals of any kind including a dissonance. In addition, he identifies the use of organum, in parallel fourths, comparable to the polyphonic music of medieval Europe which, according to him, are also not based on a harmonic principle. Instead they are based on melody and have "nothing to do with harmony as we understand it". This is because:

"the accompanying voices which generally lie above the principal one often pursue its parallel motion regardless of tonality. It only increases the volume of the sounds in about the same way as a powerful partial note would... It does not change the notes into chords with special functions which differ from those of purely melodic notes."<sup>(1)</sup>

Implicit in Hornbostel's argument is the notion that harmonic patterns which lack the chordal and tonal background of Western music are not worthy of being defined as harmony.

Harmonies do exist in African music though usually based on different principles. Kirby has noted that the use of organum was to become the basis of harmonic practice in Africa. While, according to him, European organum within the heptatonic scale tended to delay harmonic knowledge, that of Africa being (usually) within the limits of the pentatonic "forces the singers to take cognisance of new intervals - the sixth and the third"<sup>(2)</sup>. It therefore "appears that parallelism within the limits of a pentatonic scale would tend to lead naturally to a harmonic knowledge of intervals other than the simplest ones"<sup>(3)</sup>. Despite the fact that the continued reliance of melody on speech tones could be antithetical to the evolution of "systematic polyphony" in African music, Kirby's observation clearly

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(1) Hornbostel, op. cit. p.41.

(2) Kirby, P. "A Study of Negro Harmony" Musical Quarterly, Vol. xvi, 1930, p.407.

(3) Ibid, p.407.

emphasises that harmonies exist in African music though based on different principles. The abundance of the use of parallel harmonies in Africa gives credence to Kirby's observation that harmonies tend to move in parallel motion often in order for the speech contours of text to be reflected in each of the melodic lines. In such examples the emphasis seems to be on each melodic line. Instances do occur, when multiple pitch combinations arise either through the sporadic use of over-lapping call and response or through the use of occasional (ejaculatory) embellishing phrases or the addition of descant-like lines. Again, in such instances the emphasis could be mainly melodic in which case chords which result from them are rather incidental - a kind of involuntary counterpoint - lacking any predetermined or conceived harmonic principle. Such a heterophonic procedure tends to validate the opinions of writers like Hornbostel, but does not account for all the major harmonic procedures in Africa.

Indeed some studies have shown that multiple pitch combinations defined by a strong harmonic conception do occur in African music. For example among the Gogo people of Tanzania, chords based on fourths and thirds are commonly used in vocal and instrumental music. In addition this harmonic principle recognises the distinction between consonance and dissonance. For example, chordal patterns formed out of the constituent notes of the Mbira make use of the intervals of the third and the fourth which are considered consonant<sup>(1)</sup>. Among the Ekiti and the Ijesha peoples of Yoruba land, harmonic practices are commonly featured in their music. In Ekiti music such harmonic devices often serve to articulate cadential points. As Ex. 13 shows, cadential harmonies usually consist of the 'consonant' interval of major seconds and represents the most widely used harmonic technique in Ekiti vocal music.

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(1) See Nketia, J.H. "Multi part organisation in the music of the Gogo of Tanzania" Journal of the International Folk Music Council, Vol. 19, 1967, pp.79-88.



Euba has also observed the use of similar procedures among the Ijeshas<sup>(1)</sup>.

Among the Igbos of Eastern Nigeria, instances of triadic harmonies have been observed. These like those of the Ekiti often occur at cadential points serving to "intone exclamations which generally come at the end of musical phrases"<sup>(2)</sup>. It is also used to give added rhythmic strength to the exclamations - a method which Ekweme describes as a rhythmic harmony, that is, the system of employing harmony to enhance a rhythmic emphasis.

Blacking's<sup>(3)</sup> study of the tonal organisation of the Venda Initiation School reveals that the Vendas have a strong tradition of harmonic thought. As that study shows, the concept of harmony is very significant to the total musical culture of the people. For example, every tone of each muthavha is conceived as having a companion tone and consequently any melodic line can also be conceived as a sequence of chords.

In addition, "melodies may be thought much as selections of tones from hidden patterns of chords as well as being the generators of patterns of chords" to the extent that "two melodies which are harmonically equivalent are regarded as the same even though their melodies may sound different"<sup>(4)</sup>. The Vendas also recognise the existence of tonal centres similar to the Chopi (Mozambique) people's concept of the Hombe. For example in the national dance music Tshikona, played by a set of heptatonic reed pipes the central note is called the Phala while the leading note (usually a note above the Phala) is called the Thakhula, that is, "the lifter". Harmonic motion in Tshikona is characterised by a progression

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- (1) Euba, E.A. "Multi pitch combination in Yoruba choral music" Journal of the International Folk Music Council, xix, 1967, pp.66-71.
  - (2) Ekweme, "Concepts of African Musical Theory", op. cit. p.56.
  - (3) Blacking, "Tonal organisation in Venda Music" op. cit. pp.17-18.
  - (4) Ibid, p.18.

from the central note to the leading note and back to the tonic.

Blacking's study is significant in that it explains the use of harmony in Venda music from the cultural perspective of the Venda people. The often made remarks about the insignificance of harmony in African music could then be a reflection of the fact that many writers have failed to take their studies of African harmonies beyond surface level observations. As Blacking's study has shown, chordal structures which may not seem significant when viewed from a European point of view may have an underlining concept which is characterised by a coherent and well-defined harmonic principle.

That the following features are characteristic of many examples of African harmonies are however unquestionable:

- i) the frequent use of harmonic parallelisms;
- ii) the use of heterophonic procedures which result from contrapuntal combinations;
- iii) the sporadic use of cadential harmonies (as among the Ekiti - Yorubas and the Igbos);
- iv) the use of incidental harmonies arising from overlapping call and response patterns, drones and pedals;
- v) Vertically conceived multiple pitch lines are also featured in African traditional music. They, as in Yoruba and Igbo music, often make use of varied intervals including seconds, fourths and their inversions. The employment of such chords does not however follow the system of progression based on chord relationship as in conventional European tonality.

Form

Perhaps the most important formal procedure commonly employed in African music is the call and response pattern. Its prevalence in African music has been observed by people like Merriam<sup>(1)</sup>, Hornbostel<sup>(2)</sup>, Ekweme<sup>(3)</sup> and Kauffman<sup>(4)</sup>. Kauffman identifies different varieties of the pattern. These are:

- 1) Leader dominated;
- 2) Group dominated;
- 3) Alternating relationship; and
- 4) Simultaneous relationship.

These varieties may reflect the social distinctions within a society. For example the leader dominated relationship could be used in story songs in which emphasis is upon the story teller while the group dominated structures are used at ceremonial occasions for chiefs with emphasis on group solidarity.

In order to explain the importance of the use of the call and response pattern in African music, Ekweme in a study which borrows from the principles of Schenkerian analysis identifies three levels of structure in West African music: the background, the middle ground and the foreground<sup>(5)</sup>. Using examples from Igbo music, he states that "the call and response pattern constitutes the skeleton - a background structure in African forms". The other two levels - (the middle ground and the foreground) consist of elements which he classifies as constants, variables, essential and non-essential. The term 'constant' refers to elements such

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(1) Merriam, op. cit.

(2) Hornbostel, op. cit.

(3) Ekweme, L.E. "Structural levels of Rhythm and Form in African Music" African Music, Vol. 19, pp.27-35.

(4) Kaufman, op. cit. p.403.

(5) Ekweme, op. cit.

as the standard pattern which recur constantly in a musical performance.

The term 'variable' on the other hand refers to those elements like the improvisations of the master drummer which undergo the process of constant variation. 'Essential' elements include features like "a regular response of the same tune by a chorus", which may be helpful in explaining the formal outline of a piece while features such as "an occasional interjection of a verbal uttering of indefinite pitch" belong to 'non-essential' elements. Through the operation of these four, a hierarchy of structural units can be devised thus:

- i) Essential constant (EC);
- ii) Essential variable (EV);
- iii) Non-essential constant (NC); and
- iv) Non-essential variable (NV).

While the first two groups belong to the middle ground, the last two belong to the foreground.

The most important element of the organisation of form in African music - also central to Ekweme's observations - is the interaction between recurring elements and those which constantly change. - This exists for example in the alternation between a recurring rhythmic pattern such as the Konkolo rhythm and the extensive improvisations of the Iya-ilu in Yoruba Bembe ensemble<sup>(1)</sup>, in the relationship between a recurring response of the chorus and the extemporised sequences of a lead solo singer. Thus in African music "there is more of an emphasis upon repeating patterns and accumulating new material (variation or improvisation) in relationship to initial patterns, (with features like) ostinato forms (providing) the

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(1) Inanga, A. Bembe Music in Abeokuta, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Ibadan, 1983.

structure needed for the improvisational - extemporisational processes of form building"<sup>(1)</sup>.

The prevalence of improvisational and extemporisational techniques also highlights an important idea of many examples of traditional African music. Musical form is often conceived as a "process" rather than as a predetermined form. This convention of style negates the idea of a musical piece as possessing an abstract existence apart from the performer and the performance (as prevalent in European classical music) to which the performer aspires to recreate as accurately as possible, as well as the idea of the existence of a composer who is set aside from both the performer and the audience<sup>(2)</sup>.

The common use of forms such as developing strophic forms, chain song variations and thorough composed forms emphasises the importance of the principle of continuous variation in the realization of African performance - compositions.

The same point applies to large forms usually employed in some examples of instrumental music. Examples of the most elaborate of such forms are the mpokiti dance music of the Igbos and the large xylophone dance ensemble music of the Chopi people of Mozambique. While the basic structural outline and format of such forms may be predetermined, specific foreground details of texture usually vary from one performance to another. The common association of music with extramusical (social and religious) contexts also has implications for African musical forms since it is often the form and procedure of such contexts which determine that of the music. The music for the worship of Ogun (the Yoruba god of iron) is for example almost totally inconceivable outside the rituals of the worship.

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(1) Kauffman, op. cit. p.406.

(2) Small, C. Music - Society - Education, London; 1980; p.36.

The discussion above sheds light on important innovative elements of the works by contemporary African composers whose compositions are conceived for, and performed on, the concert platform. In addition to this is the idea of their works as having an abstract existence isolated from the performer and the performance and which the performer tries to present as accurately as possible to a listening, non-participating audience.

On the basis of the discussion above a list of some of the most important characteristics of the organisation of form in African traditional music can be made:

- i) The frequent use of the call and response patterns;
- ii) The emphasis on the process of continuous variation;
- iii) The importance of improvisation and extemporisation techniques in the realization of forms; and
- iv) the determination of musical forms by extra-musical contexts within which a performance takes place.

#### Meaning in African Music

In addition to its aesthetic qualities, a musical performance can transmit extra-musical messages. This belief is based on the position that the factors which govern the selection and the ordering of structural elements (melody, harmony, rhythm) of a piece may be related to cultural values which may transcend musical considerations. Thus as a means of communication the meaning which resides in it may operate beyond the purely structural. Music being

"an outward sign of human communication - (its main function) is to enhance in some way the quality of individual experience and human relationships. Its structures are reflections of patterns of human relations and the value of a piece of music as music is inseparable from its value as an expression of human experience".<sup>(1)</sup>

The relationship between the cultural and the structural in musical communication occurs in all genre - folk, popular and art and as Blacking has also stated:

"The understanding of man, the music maker, can be retarded by attempts to classify music according to its sound or to the culture of its creators. Terms such as art, folk or popular can be misleading; although they may suggest the kind of experience that the music is intended to convey they are too often used to refer to the technical complexity that it displays.

Blacking continues that:

"If the terms folk and art are to be used at all they should refer to processes, to ways of expressing the experiences of individuals in society".<sup>(2)</sup>

In this sense the terms folk and art refer to "the value of music in relation to social situations".<sup>(3)</sup> There is no real distinction between the functions of folk and art music - both reflect social values. But "while art music refers to social situations beyond those in which it is performed" folk music elevates and enhances a social situation and its value that lies chiefly in the situation itself.

The above position that art music in its communicational procedures does refer to social situations tacitly disagrees with the position of the structuralists even as wide apart as Hanslick and Stravinsky who hold the

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(1) Blacking, J. "The value of music in human experience" 1969 Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council, pp.33-34.

(2) Ibid; p.34.

(3) Ibid; p.34.

view that true meaning can only be congeneric - an absolutist view - that meaning exists mainly within a work, in the perception of the relationships set forth within it.

While it is true that one level of meaning in a musical work can be perceived in the relationship between purely structural features (a perception which takes into consideration variety, coherence and unity) another, perhaps more important level of meaning exists in perceiving how those structural features reflect social values. One problem which still confronts musicologists is the inability to show in very clear terms how those purely structural features reflect social - cultural values of individual societies. While theories from disciplines such as sociology or anthropology can be borrowed to a limited degree they cannot adequately explain the relationship between the structural and the cultural in musicology.

Two scholars who have tried to show how music refers to extra-musical elements are Cooke and Meyer. Cooke, through analyses of works by European composers who retain tonality in their compositions states that:

"the mysterious art known as music ... is primarily and basically a language of the emotions through which we directly experience the fundamental urges that move mankind without the need of falsifying ideas and images - words or pictures".(1)

Like Cooke, Meyer's view is characterised by a structuralist - expressionist principle. He states that while one level of meaning can exist in the perception of structural relationships, music can also arouse connotative responses in the listener. Thus:

"Unlike literature or the plastic arts which generally cannot be understood apart from the designative symbols they employ, Most musical experience is meaningful

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(1) Cooke, D. The Language of Music, London; 1959; p.272.



without any experience to the extra-musical world. Whether a piece of music arouses connotations depends to a great extent upon the disposition and training of the individual listener and upon the presence of cues, either musical or extra-musical, which tend to activate connotative responses".<sup>(1)</sup>

Although the basic elements of the arguments of Cooke and Meyer will be applicable to examples of traditional African music, the main cultural premise for their ideas is European. In traditional African music, social meaning can be communicated when structural elements are interpreted within social situations in which they are performed. Even when they are not performed within specific social situations, musical performances can still arouse certain feelings and reinforce social values, usually associated with their traditional contexts of performance. The main feature of this type of musical communication is that it is referential; patterns of sound are associated with certain social contexts and values. In such cases "the extra-musical social meaning is conveyed not so much by the music itself as by the direct association of sound patterns with specific social contexts".<sup>(2)</sup> It is for this reason that Nketia has suggested an "integrated approach" in the study of traditional African music since "music (in traditional Africa) is organised as part of the process of living together with formal structure and contexts often interacting together".<sup>(3)</sup>

This clarification helps us to understand another major way in which the works of modern African composers differ from those of their traditional counterparts. While art music (the idiom within which some modern African composers are creating) may be able to reflect social values, it is not

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(1) Meyer, L.B. Emotion and Meaning in Music; Chicago; 1956, p.264.

(2) Blacking; "The value of music in Human Experience"; op. cit. p.46.

(3) Nketia, J.H. The Problem of Meaning in African Music; African Music, Vol. 6, 1962, p.3.

performed or conceived within a specific religious or social context. It could be said that in traditional African societies (such as Yoruba land) music is predominantly contextual - functional and only peripherally—contemplative. The concept of art music may not be a completely new addition to African music culture. It is however a tradition which has a limited patronage in traditional societies.

#### AFRICAN IDENTITY IN NEW FORMS

A significant portion of this thesis focusses on isolating and explaining the presence and the functioning of traditional African elements in works by modern Nigerian composers. It is therefore necessary to highlight some of the issues involved in such an analytical approach. The influence of traditional African music on modern compositions occurs on different structural levels ranging from those which exist peripherally to those which co-dominate with European elements. In addition, while some structural elements of a work may appear to constitute deviations from traditional norms a closer look may reveal that they are, in actual fact, conceptually derived from or related to traditional African principles. As a result it is often necessary to relate foreground musical elements to their background conceptual framework. Thus common features of African music such as: a) the poly-textural approach to music making; b) the cyclic approach to rhythmic organisation; c) the use of blurred melodic pitches; d) the conception of music as part of a multi-media (for example those including dance and religious rituals) carry fundamental musical values which may be reflected in a variety of foreground musical elements including those which are new to traditional African music.

It is also important to note that many of the characteristic features of African traditional music which we have identified in this chapter are not elements peculiar to African music. It is when they are used in combination that they help to define an African

identity in a piece of music. Thus the characteristic features of African traditional music include elements which are also found in other musical traditions. What makes the music of African societies unique and different from those of other (non-African) societies derives from the nature of the criteria for the selection of materials and the methods through which such materials are deployed.

It is therefore necessary to mention the fact that the nature of the bond between African music and the works of European influenced modern African composers will depend not only on the sheer number of African traits which can be isolated in such works, but also on the ways through which such elements are employed. An analytical study, such as this thesis, which assesses the use of traditional African idioms in modern syncretic African compositions therefore must take into consideration both quantitative and qualitative factors.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANTECEDENTS OF MODERN NIGERIAN ART MUSIC

By the end of the first half of this century a definitive style of Nigerian church music had emerged, especially in Western Nigeria. Thus while the church had helped to consolidate the growth of European music in nineteenth century Lagos; at the beginning of this century it provided the opportunities for the development of a modern idiom of Nigerian music in which European and African elements are integrated.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the musical results of the historical details provided in Chapter 2 focusing on Nigerian church music. This discussion will be carried out by examining examples within the tradition as well as providing biographical sketches of its major practitioners. In order to see the influence of the church on the development of modern Nigerian music introductory discussions on the musical features of Nigerian Highlife and folk opera are also provided. These two idioms are orally-based and it is not intended here to provide a comprehensive analysis of their musical features. In addition to demonstrating the importance of the church in the development of modern Nigerian music, the introductory discussions of these two orally-based forms serve as a background to the study of works of the academically trained Nigerians later in the thesis. The reason why they serve as a background - and it is a fundamental point raised in this thesis - is that the two idioms together with their progenitor, Nigerian church music, are the historical and musical antecedents of modern Nigerian Art music.

Apart from the historical factors discussed in Chapter 2, other, purely musical, considerations also contributed to the increasing use of Nigerian music in the liturgies of many churches in different parts of the country. The legacy of European liturgical music brought to Nigeria in the

nineteenth century consisted mainly of hymns and chants with texts usually in English or Latin. The settings of these hymns and chants to texts in indigenous Nigerian languages often produced unsatisfactory results. An explanation of the tonal quality of Nigerian languages has been provided in Chapter 3, but we need to pursue this further by demonstrating how word meanings can be easily changed through different intonations. For example, from the di-syllabic Yoruba morpheme |ọ - wọ| four different meanings may be intended depending on how the syllables are intoned.<sup>(1)</sup>

- Thus, a) |ọ̣ - wọ̣| : (low - low tones) is the name of a town  
 b) |ọ̣ - wọ̣̣| : (mid low - low tones) means broom  
 c) |ọ̣ - wọ̣̣̣| : (mid low - high tones) means hand.

The correspondence between such intonation of words and their musical setting in traditional music was not reflected in the settings of European tunes to indigenous Nigerian texts. These new settings also often consist of such vocal techniques as melismas and neumes not usually found in Nigerian traditional vocal traditions.

These unsatisfactory features are illustrated in Exx 1 and 2 which are settings of European tunes to indigenous Nigerian texts. Noticeable in the first is the lack of correspondence between melodic contour and speech inflections of the text, as a result of which word meanings are often changed. Thus in bar 12 of Ex. 1 the word |ọ̣ - tun| (low - mid low), which means "New", has been given a new intonation |ọ̣ - tũn| (mid low - low), by the melodic descent of a second to which it is set which renders the word meaningless. In addition, the use of short melismas from bar 14 onwards (Ex. 2) has made nonsense of the word "L'OBA" (crown him). It, too, now has no meaning.

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(1) Intonations in these tonal languages (e.g. Igbo and Yoruba; see Chapter 3) usually consist of a high tone, a low tone and a mid tone. High and low tones in the above example are marked by acute accent (´) and grave accent (`) respectively. Mid tones are left unmarked.

Such problems, associated with the setting of indigenous texts to European tunes, constituted a major concern for Nigerian church musicians as far back as the beginning of this century. According to Pa Olaolu Omidéyi, (one of the pioneers of indigenous church music in Nigeria) in an interview with this writer, it was a major problem which they have attempted to solve. For example, a panel set up in Lagos in 1940 made a recommendation that original hymns should be composed which would reflect the contour relationship between text and melody as found in traditional music.<sup>(1)</sup>

The use of indigenous music in the church, which began towards the end of the nineteenth century, has therefore continued with greater impetus since the beginning of this century and remains a permanent feature of Nigerian liturgical music until the present day. It is important to note that European tunes and anthems were never abandoned. They continue to exist alongside indigenous compositions by Nigerian church musicians. Christianity has been a major religion of Southern Nigeria since the middle of the nineteenth century (unlike the Northern part which remains a predominantly Islamic region) it is not surprising to note that the use of indigenous church music was pioneered and made very popular there. It is for this reason that examples of works by church organists and choirmasters of Igbo and Yoruba (the two largest ethnic groups in Southern Nigeria) have been used in this chapter to illustrate the characteristic features of Nigerian liturgical music.

In Western Nigeria, the earliest stronghold of Christianity, especially the Anglican denomination, organists and choirmasters have, since the beginning of this century, composed numerous short vocal pieces for use during church services. Though written as far back as the first

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(1) Personal interview with Pa Omidéyi, Provost of Nigerian Ecumenical School of Church Music, Ibadan, see Appendix , p. 339.

two decades of the century, these pieces are still in use.

Of the pioneer composers active during the first half of the century in Western Nigeria the following were important: T.K.E. Phillips, the Reverend Canon J.J. Kuti, Akin George (the maternal grandfather of Ayo Bankole who later became one of the leading pioneers of modern Nigerian Art music) and the Reverend T.A. Olude. The list also includes figures such as Pa Omideyi, Chief Lasehinde and Pa G.B. Oriere. Between the 1930's and 1950's these figures were attached to churches as organists and choirmasters, or as priests. For example, T.K. Phillips was organist and choirmaster at Christ Church Cathedral, Lagos, from 1915 to 1962. In the 1940's, Akin George was organist at the First Baptist Church, Lagos, while Olaolu Omideyi, now the Provost of the Nigerian Ecumenical School of Church Music, Ibadan, was the organist of many churches in Lagos including the African Salem Church, from 1940 to 1953. Likewise, G.B. Oriere was, from 1947 till 1977, organist and choirmaster at St. Stephen's Church, Oke Aluko, Ondo. Many of these organist - composers, such as Pa G.B. Oriere and Chief Lasehinde, received no formal training in European music beyond Secondary School level. However, as apprentices under established organists, they developed the skills necessary to play hymns, chants and church anthems. A few, although they received their initial training in the church, went on to study at higher institutions to a professional level.

One such is Olaolu Omideyi. He was born in 1918 at Ibadan and attended Ibadan Grammar School and Igbobi College, Lagos. As he told me in the same interview, it was his father - himself a church organist - who introduced him to European music. After finishing his Secondary School education he went to the Pratt School of Music, Lagos, where, in 1945, he obtained a Fellowship Diploma. The Pratt School of Music initiated training in European music to a professional level in Nigeria. It was established in 1940 by Professor Pratt, a Saro. The School was affiliated to the Royal Academy of Music, London, until 1953 when it closed following the death of

its founder. On the completion of his studies at the Pratt School of Music, Omidéyi became organist and choirmaster at the African Salem Church in Lagos. In addition to his training at the Pratt School of Music, Pa Omidéyi also received organ lessons from Ezekiel Adebíyí, organist at St. Jude's, in 1938. Thus when Pa Omidéyi proceeded to the Royal School of Church Music, London in 1954, he already had a solid grounding in European music. Since his return from London, he has held several posts: Head of Music and Music Research at the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation in Lagos, Controller of N.B.C. in Ibadan and later Organist and Master of the Music at St. James' Church Cathedral - the seat of the Anglican Archbishop of Nigeria - a post he still holds. In his various capacities as organist and choirmaster, Pa Omidéyi's role in the encouragement and promotion of church music in Nigeria is similar to those of many of his colleagues such as A.T. Olude and Chief Lasehinde. Their combined efforts have helped in consolidating the growth of the Nigerian hymnody which started at the beginning of this century.

It was however T.K. Ekundayo Phillips who made the most significant contributions to the growth of Nigerian church music in the first part of this century. As organist and choirmaster at Christ Church Cathedral, the prime church in the Lagos Anglican Diocese, the responsibility fell on him more than any other person to encourage the growth of indigenous music in the church. He was born in 1884 and later attended the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) Grammar School in Lagos. He received his first organ lessons from an uncle, the Reverend Johnson, and at the age of 18 he was appointed Organist of St. Paul's Breadfruit, Lagos. He played the organ at St. Paul's for nine years. In 1911, he proceeded to the Trinity College of Music, London, to study piano, organ and violin. He thus became the second Nigerian (after the Reverend Coker<sup>(1)</sup> who studied in Germany in 1871)

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(1) See Chapter 2, p. 20.



to study music to a professional level. On his return from Britain he was appointed Organist and Choirmaster at Christ Church, now Christ Church Cathedral, Lagos. He held this post until 1962 when he retired. In 1964, five years before his death, he was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Music by the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, for his contributions to the development of music in Nigeria. One of the most important contributions of Ekundayo Phillips is that he trained many of the present day exponents of modern African Art music including Fela Sowande, Ayo Bankole and Samuel Akpabot. They are among the most prominent composers not only in Nigeria but in Africa. His significant historical position in the growth of Nigerian Church music and consequently, Nigerian modern Art music, has been acknowledged by writers and musicians. Professor Lazarus Ekweme described him as "Pioneer Composer, Choirmaster and Organist who influenced greatly the course of development of (modern) Art music in Nigeria".<sup>(1)</sup> Pa Omideyi described him as a foundation of Church music in Nigeria whom he and others see as their model of a perfect musician.<sup>(2)</sup> Fela Sowande also noted that Phillips and others "provided us with such a good foundation that today we can now contemplate building upon".<sup>(3)</sup>

In 1953 Phillips's book "Yoruba Music" was published. This book can be regarded as a treatise on the compositional style of Nigerian Church music. Before looking at examples of Nigerian Liturgical music it is instructive to summarise the main ideas put forward in the book and to see how they have helped to define the structure of Nigerian Church music especially in Western Nigeria. For although the book was not published until 1953 - and even after it had been published it was not generally accessible to Church organists - it summarises those ideas which have

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- (1) Ekweme, L.E.N. "Nigerian Music since Independence" unpublished Typescript, pp.19-20.
  - (2) Personal communication with the writer.
  - (3) Sowande, F. "Teaching of Music in Nigerian Schools" unpublished Typescript, p.30.

circulated among them and which have influenced them in writing music for church use.

Central to Phillips's views are:

- (1) that Yoruba music is based entirely on the pentatonic scale;
- (2) that harmony rarely exists in Yoruba music; and
- (3) that Yoruba music like all other musical traditions is undergoing an evolutionary process.

Thus, according to him,

"It is known that every nation's music had always been identified with a particular scale at various stages of its development. For example the Europeans, as all other nations of the world, began with the pentatonic scale. This was followed by the seven note scale with its various modes, then the major minor modes and lastly as it stands today, the chromatic scale of twelve notes."<sup>(1)</sup>

He continues that,

"Fortunately or unfortunately, Yorubas have no such succession of scales yet. They have only the pentatonic scale to their credit, although at times some strange notes creep into their songs which might be regarded as the result of an instinctive feeling after variety and extension by means of embellishment."<sup>(2)</sup>

Phillips asserts that Yoruba music is similar to European mediaeval music of "roughly from about the tenth to the fifteenth century". This is because "although the seven note scale was in use in Europe at that time so sparingly were the two notes Fah and Te (that is the perfect fourth and the major seventh) used that the music of the period could almost pass as the pentatonic".<sup>(3)</sup> Other features which Yoruba music shares with European music are, according to him,

- (1) the use of unisonous singing;

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(1) Phillips, E. Yoruba Music, Johannesburg, 1953, p.9.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid, p.9.

- (2) parallel singing, with its offspring of descant; and
- (3) the general avoidance of cadential semitones.<sup>(1)</sup>

Phillips's observations are based on two erroneous beliefs: that Yoruba music is based entirely on the pentatonic scale and that the degree of the variety of melodic pitches employed in a piece or a tradition of music is reflective of the stage of that tradition in its developmental process. As we have seen in the last chapter, although the use of the pentatonic scale is common in Yoruba music, scales which consist of as many as eight notes abound. However, features such as unisonous singing, parallel harmonies and the general absence of the cadential semitones are indeed common in Yoruba music.<sup>(2)</sup> Despite the controversial nature of Phillips's observations, they have formed the stylistic basis on which Yoruba church music is derived.

A common feature of the works of Yoruba pioneer composers of church music is that melodic contours generally reflect the tonal inflections of their underlying texts (Exx 3, 4 and 5) - a response to solve the problem of non-correspondence between textual contour and melody shown in Exx 1 and 2.

The use of the pentatonic scale is another common feature of these compositions. As their works show, the pioneer composers agreed with Phillips that the use of this scale was an effective way through which they could reflect a traditional Nigerian character in their compositions. Examples 3-5 are typical of their obsession with melodies built on this scale. The songs were usually accompanied by an organ or harmonium and traditional percussion instruments. They were usually written in tonic solfa notation. As a result the organ parts were generally improvised in

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(1) Ibid, p.12

(2) See Chapter 3, Exx. 4-13.

the performance of the songs. In addition, accompaniments usually consisted of diatonic harmonies in the style of European Protestant hymns. Examples in the compilations by Canon J.J. Kuti and A.K. Ajibola<sup>(1)</sup> illustrate the homophonic - diatonic style of these songs.

By accompanying these songs with diatonic harmony their pentatonic character was often overshadowed, thereby suppressing the traditional Nigerian character which was intended to be portrayed. In Ex 5a the interpretation of the second degree of the pentatonic scale (on which the song is based) as a dominant chord, and the treatment of the note G as the tonic, naturally imparts a strong diatonic quality to it. Phillips detested such a harmonic procedure since it negated the "mediaeval" and the traditional African character of the melodies. Thus he stated that "In Yoruba music they (the accompaniments) are very objectionable especially when harmonised by a dominant seventh followed by tonic triad chords, and all students of musical history know that dominant sevenths were neither in existence in mediaeval times nor are up till now admissible in plain-song."<sup>(2)</sup> He proceeds to caution Church composers from using such a harmonic procedure:

"Let me sound a note of warning to a certain class of composers of native airs who have lately come to the limelight and think that they are improving Yoruba music by frequently, almost invariably, using the semitonal ending Te-doh (leading note - tonic). I advise them to study Canon Kuti's collection of both original composition and of popular folksong (which contains) not a single semitonal ending."<sup>(3)</sup>

Phillips suggests alternative harmonic procedures which will not only enhance the modal quality of the songs but will also help to preserve their melodic - textual contour relationship. These procedures range from the use of parallelism (Exx 6 and 7) and canonic entries (Ex 8) to

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(1) See Appendix pp. 337-338.

(2) Ibid, p.14.

(3) Ibid, p.14.

contrapuntal and quasi-fugal techniques in Ex 9. In all these examples (which are taken from Phillips's own arrangements) melodic contours correspond with the contours of text.

The strophic form is the most commonly used principle of organisation in the songs of the Yoruba Church composers. Its use, which follows the Protestant hymnal tradition is, however, often made to conform to traditional African principles. Since the inflectionary patterns of the texts of each verse have to be reflected in the melodic settings, adjustments or variations occur from one stanza to another (Ex 10).

There are also examples of compositions which can be referred to as "through composed", known as Ere Arose Ologeere <sup>(1)</sup> in Yoruba musical tradition. Such songs are usually performed as anthems by choirs on special occasions such as at Harvest, Easter and Christmas. These songs are generally longer than the strophic songs and they often contain more diverse musical elements. A religious theme usually runs through their different sections although they are often made up of contrasting musical material. Thus, Odun yungbayingba, Ex 11 has a fantasia-like format whose first section, bars 1-12, is a closed structure which consists of four short irregular phrases: A (bars 1-4); B (bars 5-8); C (bars 9 & 10) and A<sup>1</sup> (bars 11 and 12). The second section is much longer (bars 15 to the end). It consists of various phrases of calls and responses - while the chorus part remains unchanged, the text for the soloist continually changes. As a result melodic patterns also change in order for them to reflect the inflectionary patterns of text. Collectively, the second section, in its call and response patterns, provides striking contrasts to the first. In addition the complete abandonment of the first section gives the piece an open-ended formal procedure. This formal procedure represents, in basic

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(1) See Olaniyan, *op. cit.* for a discussion of this and other features of Yoruba "Dundun-Sekere" music.

terms, a direct evocation of the essential ingredients of Yoruba performance techniques: looseness of structure, alternations of solo and chorus, and the use of improvisatory techniques.

In more recent times (from the late 1950's) a composer of Church music in Western Nigeria who has effectively reconciled the demands of European music and those of traditional language is Dayo Dedeke. His works show some departures from the general practice of most Nigerian Church music composers. Born in 1923 he studied music under the Reverend I.O. Kuti before going to Trinity College, London, where he studied singing, conducting and composition. In 1963 Ma Gbagbe ile, a collection of many of his own compositions and arrangements, was published. The publication of this book enabled the performances of his compositions (which hitherto had been restricted mainly to the churches in Western Nigeria, especially in Abeokuta, his native town) to gain widespread popularity in many parts of the country.

Although Dedeke is a contemporary of Fela Sowande (whose compositions roughly marked the beginning of Nigerian Art music),<sup>(1)</sup> many of his songs stand, stylistically, between the tradition of Nigerian church music (as typified in the compilations of Canon J.J. Ransome-Kuti) and the more complex works of the composers of modern Nigerian Art music such as Fela Sowande and Akin Euba. In fact, the line of demarcation between these two genres (Church and Art music) becomes blurred in some of his works.

While songs like Yio Feran mi (p.74) and Wa ba mi gbe (p.70) are written in the general tradition of Nigerian Church music (in their use of strophic form, pentatonic scale and text controlled melodies) others, as the discussion below shows, present more skillful reconciliation between European elements (especially harmony and form) and African elements (such

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(1) See Chapter 5.

as language demands and call and response pattern). In these respects they are akin to, though less complex than, the part songs of Bankole and Ndubuisi.<sup>(1)</sup>

Some of Dedeke's works are written for solo voice (or many voices in unison) while others are part songs ranging from two to four voices. In all cases he provides organ/piano accompaniment as well as a rhythmic accompaniment for three drums. For songs in  $\frac{3}{4}$  and  $\frac{2}{4}$  he uses two different rhythmic accompaniments shown in Ex 11b.

A general feature of Dedeke's harmony is the use of parallel thirds and sixths within a European diatonic harmonic framework even when, like his predecessors, the highest part is based on a pentatonic scale. Examples of this harmonic practice abound and can be found in such songs as Baba Rere so wa (p.17), Keresimesi Odun de (p.38) and Olorun wa ju enia lo (p.60). The use of parallel harmonies enables Dedeke, like Phillips, to write melodic parts which follow the rise and fall of the inflection of the underlying texts in all parts. Dedeke's harmonic style is often entirely diatonic consisting of only an occasional use of the secondary dominant. An interesting feature of his style is the unconventional use of the dominant seventh. At times it occurs as an unprepared opening chord as in Olusegun Ajasegun (p.50). As this example also shows, the minor seventh is not always resolved. Another harmonic feature is the sporadic division of parts to articulate cadential points as commonly found in Igbo and Yoruba traditional music. This is illustrated in Ojo Ngori ojo (pp.54-55) bars 25-26; and Ogongo Baba Eye (pp.102-103) bars 4-5, 8-9. The use of the dominant seventh and triads other than the tonic as opening chords sheds light on Dedeke's syncretic style. We have given instances in which a Yoruba song may start with a melodic pitch

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(1) See Chapter 10.

other than that which is the lowest within its scale. The most common of this melodic pattern is the occurrence of the second degree of a scale as the first note (of a song) which may or may not function as the note of repose.<sup>(1)</sup> This note is often interpreted as the fifth of a dominant chord by Dedeke. This stylistic feature reflects an African reinterpretation of European harmonic practice. As Olusegun Ajasegun shows, Dedeke is less concerned with the harmonic - functional contexts of the dominant seventh than its use to enhance a melodic pattern. In other words melodic consideration assumes a greater force than a harmonic factor in the use of that chord. This is one manifestation of the African background of this composer. From the examples of African music (as discussed in Chapter 3) where harmonic patterns are sometimes dictated by purely melodic decisions there is a clear link with Dedeke's technique of composition.

The use of parallel harmonies enables Dedeke, like Phillips, to write melodic parts which follow the rise and fall of the inflection of the underlying texts. On some occasions, however, especially when he writes for up to four parts, the lowest part does not move in parallel motion with the upper three parts. This is because the use of parallel movement in thirds and sixths in four parts becomes problematic if dissonant harmonic relationships are to be avoided. In Olusegun Ajasegun (p.50) for example, while the three upper parts have parallel movements the bass line moves independently. Realising the implication of this for the tonal inflection of the words the basses are instructed to hum. In other words, if the bass part had been allowed to sing the words given to the upper three parts it would not have been possible for it to consistently reflect (in its melodic pattern) the tonal inflection of the words. The balancing of linguistic consideration against that of harmony as shown in the example above is a regular feature of Dedeke's style.

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(1) See Ex. 12, Chapter 3.



The two most common formal patterns in Dedeke's works are strophic and ternary with regular occurrences of the call and response pattern. In Keresimesi Odun de (p.38) is an example of the call and response pattern interlocked with ternary form. In the first section (bars 1-10) the call and response pattern is used to create a ternary subdivision: A (bars 1-6), B (7 and 8) and A<sup>1</sup> (9 and 10). The second section (bars 11-28) consists of various call and responses. The third, a repetition of A, brings back the ternary subdivision:-

Overall form:	A	B	C
Subsections :	( a      b      a )	{ calls and { responses }	( a b a )
Bars :	1 - 10	11 - 28	1 - 10 repeated

The role of organ/piano accompaniment in Dedeke's compositions often goes beyond that of being merely supportive. Naturally in solo and unison songs it is left for the piano to provide the harmonic background. In A tun pade (p.14) for example, the supertonic - dominant progression in bars 11 and 13 provides a formal division between bars 1-10 and 14 to the end thereby providing a binary outline to the piece. Although a binary form was already implied in the song itself - in its arrangement of phrases - the harmonic pattern of the accompaniment reinforces it. In another example, Ki ise gbogbo eniti npe mi (p.41), the piano is used to reinforce a trisectional division of the piece. In the middle section provides a contrast with the outer sections in its irregular phrasing. The harmonic interpretation of bar 16 as an added sixth chord brings a suspended quality to the middle section whose resolution is provided by the repetition of the A section.

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Dedeke's skilful rapprochement between Western harmony and the demands of traditional language represents the culmination of the experiments which began in Yoruba Churches in Western Nigeria. Building on the pioneering efforts of T.K.E. Phillips he demonstrated through his compositions that Yoruba words can still retain their inflectionary contour even within a largely European harmonic context.

In Eastern Nigeria the first Protestant missions were established at Onitsha and Bonny in 1856 and 1864 respectively. It was however not until the beginning of this century that Christian activities assumed the level of popularity that they enjoyed in the mid-nineteenth century in Western Nigeria. Even then it was not until the 1950's that Igbo hymns began to feature prominently during religious services.

The most significant attempts at using Nigerian music in Christian liturgy were in the Anglican Churches. As a result of the relatively conservative doctrinal policy of the rival Roman Catholic Church the use of Igbo music during services was not encouraged. Commenting on this conservative policy Ekweme states that:

"The Bible was forbidden to be read by laymen lest they should misinterpret the word of God and thereby sin. Consequently until very recently when this law was revoked there was no Igbo translation of the Bible and even now only certain books such as the Gospels have been translated into Igbo with official Catholic approval. Apart from a few prayers such as "Hail Mary" and canticles such as the "Magnificat" translated into Igbo, the Mass was, until recently, conducted in Latin."<sup>(1)</sup>

It was therefore left to the musicians and members of the congregation in the Anglican Churches to introduce original compositions and arrangements of folk tunes into the Church. The Anglican Youth Fellowship provided a major initiative in the use of Igbo music in the Church.<sup>(2)</sup> This society, which was established in the 1950's, attracted a

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- (1) Ekweme, L.E. "African music in Christian Liturgy : the Igbo Experiment", African Music, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1973, p.17.
  - (2) For a detailed study of Anglican Youth Fellowship songs in Nigeria, see Agu, D.C. - Indigenous choral worship in African Christian worship: An analytical study of the Youth Fellowship songs in the Niger Diocese of Nigeria. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Queens University, Belfast, 1984.

wide membership from young Igbo Christians who saw a similarity between the fellowship and the Igbo traditional age grade system.<sup>(1)</sup> As Ekweme has observed "singing was a characteristic activity of youth fellowships. Songs were created which became the property of the group, because composers were anonymous and often faded quickly from the memory."<sup>(2)</sup>

These songs were usually adaptations of traditional ones in which original texts were replaced by Biblical texts or "imaginative re-enactions of Biblical situations infused with emotional feeling".<sup>(3)</sup> Although the musical activities of the youth fellowship were often restricted to sing-song activities which took place outside the Church, such was their popularity that the idea of using original Igbo hymns in the Church gained wide appeal.

It was however through the works of the cream of dedicated Igbo hymnologists and organists that a tradition of Igbo liturgical music emerged. The works of these composers often show stronger European influences when compared with those of their Yoruba counterparts. For while Yoruba composers based virtually all their melodies on the pentatonic scale Igbo composers have a predilection for diatonic melodies; and while the melodies of the Yorubas always follow the rise and fall of inflections of text, many of the Igbos do not.

The relatively greater preference for Western musical elements is an aspect of the general inclination of the Igbos toward a European way of life. According to Ottenberg "the Igbos are probably (the) most receptive to culture change and (the) most willing to accept Western ways of any large group in Nigeria".<sup>(4)</sup> There are certain historical reasons for this.

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(1) For a discussion of the traditional age grade system in Igbo land see Jeffreys, M.D. "The Bull-roarer Among the Ibo", African Studies, March, 1949, pp.23-34.

(2) Ibid, p.18.

(3) Ibid, p.18.

(4) Ottenberg, O. "Ibo receptivity to Change" in Continuity and Change in African Cultures, (eds.) Bascom, R. and Herscovits, M. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1959, p.138.

The introduction and spread of Christianity took a different pattern from that of Western Nigeria. While it was the educated elite - the Saros - who became the initial adherents of Christianity in Western Nigeria, in Eastern Nigeria where there was no such elite group, Christianity was at once introduced to, and accepted by, the natives. Since Christianity brought with it a European way of life, European culture, including music, was widely accepted by the majority of Igbo people. Anthony King has also provided reasons. According to him:

The Igbo and the other stateless states had probably been accustomed to immigrants and cultural innovation well before their contacts with Europe and were thus prepared for new means of social advancement through education, material culture in the form of dress, housing, radios, gramophones and band instruments and through a concomitant degree of musical acculturation.<sup>(1)</sup>

The general receptivity of Igbo music to change is also due to the fact that:

Whereas in the Urban states (e.g. Yoruba land) the complex combination of social, economic authoritarianism and other interests have encouraged the persistence of unified music traditions; the extremely local divergencies of music in Igbo society have prompted its change.<sup>(2)</sup>

Important pioneer composers of Church music in Igbo land included Harcourt Ikoli Whyte, David Okongwu, Nelson Okoli and William Echezona. Like their Yoruba counterparts, some were self-taught while others studied music to a professional level. For example, Nelson Okoli and Harcourt Whyte had no formal music training while David Okongwu and William Echezona did. Thus David Okongwu (born 1925) studied privately to obtain what was known as the Higher Local Certificate of the Trinity College of Music, London. William Echezona (Ph.D) went further; he studied at Trinity College and later at Michigan State University where he became the first Nigerian

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(1) King, A. "Nigerian Music" in New Grove Dictionary of Music, London, 1980, Vol.13, p.240.

(2) Ibid.

musician to obtain his doctorate. His greatest contribution to the development of Igbo Church music was that he organised, among local Church choirs, various competitions in which original compositions by Igbo composers were performed.

The stylistic features of Igbo Church music are clearly illustrated in the works of Harcourt Whyte, the father of Igbo Church music. He was born in 1905 at Abonnema in Rivers State. Tragically, at the age of twenty, he was stricken with leprosy. Consequently, in 1924, he was among the forty one lepers receiving treatment at Port Harcourt General Hospital. Later, transferred to Uzoakoli leper settlement in Imo State, he became healed. He firmly believed that his recovery was an act of God; and during his stay at Uzoakoli leper settlement Whyte joined fellow lepers in daily prayers during which Methodist hymns were sung. It was through these hymns that he received the inspiration to compose. His compositions reflected the homophonic style of Protestant hymns as can be observed in "Ru ole mgbe" and "Chukwu No Rue Ebigh'ebi", Exx. 12 and 13. Although Whyte also favours the use of parallel thirds and sixths in his part writing, this feature is less pervading than in, for example, the works of Dedeke. Thus Whyte's use of contrary motion between two or more vocal lines often results in melodic parts which do not reflect the rise and fall of their texts.

His harmonic vocabulary which often revolves around the tonic, subdominant and dominant generally, precludes modulations and often contains elements which are by conventional European standards, unsophisticated, in particular the use of unorthodox voice leadings, which include consecutive fifths, unprepared and unresolved sevenths and unconventional cadential formulae. As an illustration, in the eighth bar of "Chukwu no Rue Ebi'gh Ebi" (Ex. 13) Whyte uses the third inversion of a dominant seventh chord in a manner which suggests both plagal and perfect cadence. Likewise in bar 3 of Ex. 12 the subdominant is used with a superimposed tonic at a cadential

point. These two examples are symptomatic of Whyte's predelection for the plagal cadence - the Amen pattern - which is a regular feature of Protestant hymn tunes. Even when the upper parts do not suggest it, Whyte believes that the lowest part (the bass) can single handedly effect a plagal cadence. A fundamental factor in the use of unconventional progressions and voice leadings lies in the fact that Whyte usually conceives his parts in a linear fashion even within a homophonic texture. Thus, his harmonic vocabulary is often a product of both the vertical conception (typical of Protestant hymns) and the contrapuntal movement common in Igbo traditional vocal music. His unorthodox harmonic procedures are manifestations of the "conflict" between these two different musical syntaxes.

Whyte's strongest allegiance to Igbo traditional music takes place in the use of forms that develop structures and irregular phrasing. Even seemingly strophic forms are not strophic in the European sense of the form. Extensive variations are often made in the second and subsequent stanzas of some of his songs which place them outside the scope of a strophic form. This procedure is illustrated in "Onye Mmerie", Ex. 14, of which the irregular strophes can be observed.

Another prominent formal technique favoured by Whyte is the use of an Igbo-derived technique in which a recognisable melodic phrase undergoes a continuous process of variation. This technique is illustrated in Ex. 14b and Ex. 14c both of which are based on motives x and y respectively. As the examples show, these motives undergo continuous change, since the text changes and the melody must reflect the altered contour.

Thus, it is the drawing together of musical elements from traditional Nigerian music (including pentatonic scales, call and response patterns and the sympathetic relationship between language inflection and melodic contour)

and those from European music (such as diatonic harmony, and use of strophic forms) that is the stylistic core of Nigerian Church music. While in the realm of harmony traditionally derived pentatonic scales usually acquiesce to an all-pervading European diatonicism (as in the works of the Yoruba composers) the formal synthesis between European and African procedures remains finely balanced, as in Dedeke's works. The most prominent influence of traditional Nigerian culture on these compositions comes from the indigenous language. There is a general agreement among these composers that the correspondence between melodic contour and the rise and fall of language inflections is an important compositional premise. As a result, considerations of language have conditioned the different structural aspects of these works: melodic contour as in the works of composers like Dedeke and Phillips; harmonic technique as in the parallel harmonies of Harcourt Whyte and Dedeke; and developing formal procedures as in the works of Kuti and Whyte.

The synthesis of traditional and European music elements in these Church compositions constitutes a stylistic paradigm and historical foundation for the works of composers of Art music many of whom had their initial musical training in the Church.<sup>(1)</sup> For example, the stylistic issue of reconciling the demands of the pre-compositional elements of language inflection and elements of European music (such as harmony and form) is central to the vocal styles of Ayo Bankole, Akin Euba, Okechuckwu Ndubuisi and Joshua Uzoigwe.<sup>(2)</sup> Also, the compositional activities in the Church mark the beginning of creative expressions in a written as distinct from an oral tradition, which is the distinguishing feature of Nigerian traditional music.

The stylistic relationship between Nigerian Church music and Nigerian

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(1) See Chapter 5.

(2) See Chapters 9 and 10.

Highlife can be seen by looking at examples of Highlife music composed by Fela Sowande<sup>(1)</sup> and Victor Olaiya. Olaiya can be regarded as the chief exponent of Highlife in Nigeria. He was born in Calabar, Cross River State, of Ondo parentage. He arrived in Lagos in 1947 to pursue a career in music by joining bands such as the Sammy Akpabot's Players and the Ritz Tempo Orchestra. In 1956, having become proficient on the trumpet and gained a considerable knowledge of the basic principles of European tonal harmony, he formed his own outfit, "Victor Olaiya and his All Stars Band." In the same year he was invited by the Nigerian Government to perform in the Congo to encourage and inspire the Nigerian soldiers on peace missions there during the Congo crisis. Victor Olaiya was the brain behind the formation of the first Government recognised professional body of musicians in Nigeria. This body, known as the "National Union of Musicians" (NUM), featured prominently during the Nigerian Independence celebrations of 1st October, 1960 by organising a band which performed at both the Independence Ball at Federal Palace Hotel, and at the state banquet at the State House in Lagos.

Before looking at examples of Highlife it is important to note the significance of the official recognition of the NUM. It symbolises the sanctioning by the Government, of the new professional status of modern Nigerian musicians. Professionalism in music was not a new and foreign phenomenon to Nigerian traditional musical culture. There is however a substantial difference between the semi-professional status of the Yoruba Bata player, the Hausa Praise singer and the fully professional Highlife musician. Although membership of the NUM was mainly confined to Highlife musicians its formation was an important precedent for the Government's recognition of other professional bodies such as the "Association of Church Organists" in 1965 (eight years after its formation at Ibadan).

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(1) A discussion of the life and works of Sowande forms part of Chapter 5.



An arrangement by Fela Sowande<sup>(1)</sup> and a transcription of Victor

Olaiya's song shown in Exx. 15 and 16a clearly illustrate the main stylistic features of Highlife. These are the use of diatonic melodies and cyclic harmonic progressions which continuously revolve around primary triads and characterised by a prevalent use of the raised super-tonic and the minor seventh as embellishing notes (Ex. 15 bars 5, 9, 13 and 17). As in the works of the Anglican Church composers, melodic contour often reflects that of language, a feature which also results in the use of parallel harmonies in thirds and sixths. The rhythmic flow is often syncopated within a metric framework of usually four beats per bar. The use of diatonic scales and syncopated rhythmic patterns underlines the stylistic affinity between Highlife music and the music of the Aladura Churches. Although the Aladura Church music does not differ significantly from that of the Anglican Church it is important to mention that it is usually characterised by diatonic melodies and a more dynamic rhythmic character (Exx. 17 and 18). These two features are not commonly employed in the vocal melodies of the Yoruba Anglican Church, since, unlike those of the Anglican Church, the songs of the Aladura Church are products of uncensored, spontaneous creations. The use of dance-like rhythm and diatonic scales in Highlife music thus have a precedence in the music of the Aladura Churches. The most common form employed in Highlife is ternary. Thus in a Highlife performance a theme would be introduced at the beginning and followed by a middle section in which instruments improvise one after another over, usually, a riff-like motif such as that shown in Ex. 16b, bars 13-16. In the last section (as in Ex. 16b) the opening will be recalled.

A discussion of the role of the Church in the development of Modern Nigerian music remains incomplete without mention of the Nigerian

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(1) The arrangement is based on a popular Highlife melody set to Fielding Kirk's words.

Modern Folk Opera - a musico-dramatic genre which emerged in the early 1940s. Ex-church organists and choirmasters who had presented Biblical stories under the patronage of the Church soon realised the potential of musical plays as an artistic form outside the Church. For example, the pioneer of this tradition, Hubert Ogunde, was, until 1945, the organist at the Church of the Lord, Aladura, Lagos, where he presented many religious musicals, usually known as Cantatas. In 1945 he formed "The African Music and Dance Research Party" which still performs folk operas. While his earliest operas "Strike and Hunger" (1945) and "Yoruba Romu" (1964) were protest plays and political satires characterised by strong criticisms of the Government, his more recent work have relied mainly on the use of traditional Yoruba myths and legends. For example, "Aiye", "Aropin' teda" and "J'ayesinmi" - a trilogy - have all explored traditional beliefs in reincarnation, witchcraft and destiny.

Although Ogunde's operas are packed with traditional folk songs it was Duro Ladipo who used traditional Yoruba music to significantly enhance the dramatic character of his operas. Like Hubert Ogunde, he was initially an organist, holding a post at the Anglican Church, Oshogbo (where his father had been a priest) until 1956 after which he decided to form an operatic company. In 1959 Ladipo became an initiate of the Cult of Sango (the Yoruba god of thunder) solely to familiarise himself with Yoruba ritual worship. His reason for taking this decision was that he saw the use of traditional rituals, myths and beliefs as indispensable aspects of his operas. His two most important works, Moremi and Obakoso which use the abundant resources of hero legends are typical of Duro Ladipo's reliance on traditional Yoruba culture for plot, characterisation and music. These works are orally based and although a script may be written, as in the case of Obakoso, dialogue and music are largely improvised. It is therefore not intended to discuss or analyse any of these folk operas

in any detail although important features of this genre can be seen in the folk opera Obakoso. The introduction provided below is based partly on my own personal experience of the opera, my discussion with the former director of music of Duro Ladipo's operatic company, Mr. Yemi Adeleke, who also sang several of the songs used in the opera, and an interview with Professor Robert Armstrong, who has edited and translated the text of the opera.<sup>(1)</sup>

The opera, Oba Koso is based on the story of the resurrection and the deification of Sango - the Yoruba god of thunder and lightning. Sango was, in his lifetime, the king of Oyo, one of the old kingdoms of the Yoruba Empire. Sango, a powerful and ferocious king, was said to emit fire from his mouth whenever he spoke. Such was his power that he constantly waged war against other Yoruba kingdoms. However, Sango fell out with two of his warrior chiefs who did not always approve of his policies. He tried unsuccessfully to get rid of these two generals - Timi and Gbonka. The internal wrangling between the three of them was such that Sango eventually lost the confidence of his people. He was driven to committing suicide. This action was seen by his family and the people of Oyo as a disgrace to Oyo town and Sango himself. They therefore decided to deny that Sango hanged himself. Hence they said - Oba Koso (which means, the King did not hang). Later, Sango spoke from "heaven" to his people amidst thunder and lightning denying that he had ever hanged himself. Even today, Sango is worshipped all over Yoruba land as the god of lightning and thunder.

The opera was written and produced in 1963 in Osogbo, Oyo State, and has since remained a regular work on the Nigerian stage. It has also been performed in Darkar (1972), London (1975), Berlin (1975) and the

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(1) The texts and translations from Oba Koso quoted in this discussion are from the edition of Armstrong, R. et al Occasional Publications, No. 10, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, 1968.

United States (1976). Although there is a libretto, written by the composer, actors and actresses are allowed the freedom to extemporise. As a result, details of dialogue often change from one performance to another. The use of music in the opera (as in all of these folk operas) takes the form of alternating songs and dances with spoken dialogue. These are usually accompanied by a battery of dundun drums. These songs were originally taught by rote and singers have relied on their memory to reproduce them on other occasions. Neither Ladipo nor any of his cast could read or write music. Since the tonal contour of the text of the songs often suggest the melodic patterns, the problem of memorising them is not too great. Although most of the songs were composed by Duro Ladipo himself the accompaniment provided on the drums was generally improvised under the guidance of Yemi Adeleke. The melodic features of the songs used in the opera belong to two main categories - the syncretic and the Yoruba recitative - like Oriki Mode. Syncretic refers to melodies which make use of European diatonic scales (Exx. 19 and 20) while Yoruba classical style refers to those which make use of materials often used in Yoruba closed ritual worships (Ex. 21). The choice of either style that accompanies recitatives and songs is normally determined by the nature of the text. When the text is based on every-day Yoruba language, the syncretic form is used. On the other hand, when the text is based on Yoruba poetry, the Oriki style is used. It is instructive to see a correspondence between these two categories and the use of arias and recitatives in European opera, especially of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Unlike European recitative however the Oriki is rarely used as a form of direct dialogue. On the other hand, it is the aria-like songs (of the syncretic style) that are often used to complement or substitute dialogues. For example, Sango's decision to commit suicide and Oya's advice to him not to, are expressed in a duet, Ex. 19, written in the syncretic style. Likewise the lamentation of Oya over the death of her husband (Sango) at the end of

the opera is expressed in a very emotive song in the syncretic style,  
Ex. 20.

Songs in the Oriki mode often perform different functions. They might retard the progress of the plot of the opera by deviating to present mythological and historical details which shed light on aspects of the Yoruba world view. Thus they generally provide a historical or cultural context within which the actions and the plot of the opera can be more properly understood. Songs in the Oriki mode are intoned with great intensity of feeling. As an expressive and dramatic form commonly found in traditional Yoruba music its use in Oba Koso often helps to achieve a significant dramatic effect. It combines historical, literary and musical functions; cataloguing historical and cultural details coded in parables and proverbs and presented in an expressive recitative-like style. One example will serve to illustrate the literary, the cultural and the musical features of songs in the Oriki mode. Ex. 21 is a line rendered by Timi, one of Sango's war generals. Here Timi was planning a rebellion against Sango. He went to Ede, a town in Sango's kingdom, to solicit the support of the people. He urged them to transfer their loyalty from Sango to him. As Ex. 21 shows, his appeal is not rendered in a direct dialogue with the people but in a long recitative rich in imagery and passion.

Apart from their role as an accompaniment, the dundum drums are also used for signals or to evoke a particular dramatic situation. Throughout the opera, for example, they are used to announce the entries of Sango by playing tonal imitations of the greetings usually accorded him, Ex. 22. In addition, they are often used to depict the violent power and the ferocity of Sango - the deified god of thunder and lightning - by providing loud drum rolls.

Duro Ladipo's "Oba Koso" exemplifies one of the earliest adaptations of European musicals to express traditional Nigerian mythology and within which traditional micro musico-dramatic elements (folk tales and Oriki for example) are used. This opera like those of Ogunde, represents a complete "Africanisation" of a principle basic to European musicals. "Oba Koso" uses instruments which are exclusively African, largely improvised music and the evocation of a traditional Yoruba spectacle in which drummers, singers and dancers interact in a communal aesthetic experience.

In Chapters 6-10 we shall see how the works of the academically trained Nigerian composers represent extensions and developments of the basic principles already presented in Nigerian indigenous Church music, Highlife and Nigerian Folk Opera.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONTEMPORARY MUSIC AND NATIONAL CULTURE: NIGERIAN COMPOSERS OF MODERN ART MUSIC

Although it was through the Church that the concept of music as a contemplative Art received widespread popularity in Nigeria,<sup>(1)</sup> it was left to the efforts of formally trained composers and musicologists to forge new idioms and styles into their works before a modern tradition of Nigerian Art music could be evolved. While the earliest of them, Fela Sowande, started his compositional activities in 1940 it was not until the early sixties that several Nigerian composers who chose to compose in the idiom of European classical music emerged. Receiving their initial training in the Church, many of them later came to England to study music at a Conservatoire.

Constantly aware of the sacred bonds between a musician and the society in traditional Nigeria and having chosen a foreign, European, idiom for their creative expressions, the works of these composers are often characterised by bold experimentations aimed at bringing about a resolution and synthesis of opposing styles and techniques. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the composers whose works will be studied to illustrate the experimental nature of modern Nigerian Art music are Fela Sowande, Akin Euba, Ayo Bankole, Samuel Akpabot, Okechukwu Ndubwisi and Joshua Uzoigwe.

This chapter serves as a general introduction to the lives of each of the composers as well as the major objectives and beliefs which prescribe the nature of their creative efforts. The discussion of the composers does not represent an exhaustive essay on their lives and their works. Emphasis has been laid on what is considered to be the most

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(1) See Chapter 1.

significant elements of their creative career, serving as a general background to the analyses of representative examples of their works in Chapters 6-11.

Fela Sowande is undoubtedly the father of Modern Nigerian Art music and perhaps the most distinguished and internationally known African composer. As the most significant pioneer-composer of works in the European classical idiom, his works marked the beginning of an era of Modern Nigerian Art music. Building on the pioneering works of the composers of Nigerian Church music, Sowande has laid a foundation on which younger generations of Nigerian composers have continued to build. His firm beliefs in political and cultural nationalism have been reflected in different ways in his musical compositions. The nature and the development of these beliefs have been determined and influenced by the circumstances of his cultural environment, his upbringing, his training and his career.

He was born in Lagos in 1905 into a middle class family. His father, Emmanuel Sowande, was a priest-musician and one of the pioneers of Nigerian Church music at the beginning of the century. As Fela Sowande recalls, his first contact with Western music came through him:

"My father was a priest (who) taught at St. Andrew's College, (Oyo), the mission's teaching training institute... Music was around and I suppose some of it rubbed off on me."

This later became a motivation for him

"to wish to study European music properly... At that time I thought it was a liability, but I think on looking back it was quite an asset."<sup>(1)</sup>

Apart from parental influence a more important influence came from the Church through Dr. Ekundayo Phillips whom we have described as the father of Nigerian Church music in Chapter 4. Phillips brought up Sowande as a

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(1) Southern, E. "Interview with Fela Sowande - the Chief Priest of Music" Black Perspective in Music, Vol. No. 19, pp.



choir boy at Christ Church in Lagos. Under him Sowande was introduced to the mainstream of European Church music repertoire as well as the Yoruba experimental compositions popular at that time in Lagos Churches. In addition to being a chorister Sowande also studied organ under Phillips and he recalls how he regularly listened to "Phillips's playing of Bach, Rheinberger and others".<sup>(1)</sup>

Most of Sowande's works were not written until and after his period of study in England. In 1934 he went to London to study European classical and popular music. As an external candidate at the University of London, he studied organ privately under tutors which included George Oldroyd and George Cunningham, obtaining his Fellow of the Royal College of Organists with credit in 1943. He was awarded the Harding Prize for tests at the organ, the Limpus prize for theoretical work and the Read prize for the highest aggregate marks in the fellowship examination. Sowande also held the degree of Bachelor of Music of the University of London. He was also a Fellow of the Trinity College of Music.

In addition to his academic pursuits, Sowande engaged himself in a host of professional activities while in England. He was the solo pianist in a London performance of Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" in 1936, and he was Organist and Choirmaster at the West London Mission of the Methodist Church from 1945 to 1952. It was during this period that he began his compositional career and it is not surprising that his first works were written for the organ. The Church factor which formed the basic foundation of his musical career continued to be the axis of his musical life. The organ works written during this period included Oyigiyigi, Kyrie, Prayer, Obangiji, Gloria and Ka mura.<sup>(2)</sup> These, like virtually all Sowande's organ works, are based on Nigerian melodies.

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(1) Ibid.

(2) For a list of Sowande's compositions see pp. 333-334 of the Appendix.

This stylistic trait represents one significant aspect of Sowande's objective of giving his works an African flavour. As a composer he always felt the need to communicate to an African audience. He recollected how he used to test and sample the reactions of the black members of his congregation in London each time he played any of his works: "If they kept walking out I knew I was not getting to them. But if I was able to communicate my ideas to them they would sit down and I would say O.K. I got them... I have to communicate, otherwise I feel I am doing nothing. If those who listen to my music cannot hear what I am saying ... to me it's a sheer waste of time."<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus, right from the outset, Sowande defined his most important objective for composing. Despite the very strong influences of European nineteenth century music on his works - as we shall see in Chapters 6 and 8 - the use of African melodies as thematic material seemed to him to be a major way of incorporating elements of African music in his works. We shall take up this point later in the thesis.

In 1941, four years before Sowande started playing for the church, he was appointed Musical Adviser to the colonial film Unit of the British Ministry of Information in London. His main job was to provide background music to a series of educational films designed for Africa. He also gave many lecture-programmes with musical illustrations for the BBC African Service. The lectures were given under the general title, "West African music and the possibilities of its development". For the film music and the lectures he collected African melodies. These were later to be developed into original compositions, in particular, Six Sketches for full Orchestra and the African Suite, both of which were issued by Decca Records in London in 1953. Compared with his organ works (works such as Oyigiyigi and Gloria) these works show a more African derived rhythmic and harmonic

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(1) Op. cit.

character. Considering the educational objective of these works such characteristics are not unexpected. The more intricate formal procedures of the organ works were deliberately abandoned in them.

Sowande's career in broadcasting continued in Lagos in the 1950s as Head of Music and Music Research of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation. This post afforded him opportunity to conduct further research into the traditional music of Nigeria, especially that of the Yoruba. His interest in traditional music continued to increase while at the NBC and in 1962 he took up the post of a Research Fellow at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. During his stay at the University of Ibadan he carried out research not only into traditional Nigerian music but also into traditional religion.<sup>(1)</sup> In IFA<sup>(2)</sup> (Yoruba divination) for example he examined the concept of divination among the Yorubas, while in Oruko Amutorunwa<sup>(3)</sup> he provided a list of Yoruba sacred names together with their symbolic meanings.

In no other work is Sowande's appreciation of Nigerian culture and his strong beliefs in cultural nationalism more revealing than his Folk Symphony (1960). At the peak of his research activities at the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation and just before he became a Research Fellow at the University of Ibadan, Sowande was asked to write a work to mark the Nigerian Independence celebrations by the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation. This work, the Folk Symphony, was premiered on October 1st, 1960 during the Independence celebrations. It was later in 1962 performed by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra at Carnegie Hall through the sponsorship of the African Cultural group of New York. The work shows a very strong reflection of African elements and it could be argued that it marks the climax of Sowande's commitment to nationalism. It is not that

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(1) For a list of Sowande's research work see pp. 344-345.

(2) Sowande, F. IFA (Yoruba divination). Unpublished manuscript. n.d.

(3) Sowande, F. Oruko Amutorunwa. Unpublished manuscript. n.d.

the basic stylistic features of the symphony are significantly different from those which have appeared in his earlier works, such as Oyigiyigi and the African Suite.<sup>(1)</sup> They remain essentially the same: the use of African folk tunes - treated in a nineteenth century European harmonic style as well as Yoruba inspired heterophonic procedures, the employment of conventional European forms - such as Sonata and Rondo - and the evocation of the rhythmic idiom of traditional Nigerian music. What is presented in the Symphony, as will be seen in Chapter 8, is a more mature and organic reconciliation of these culturally different elements.

Before composing the Folk Symphony, Sowande had written vocal works which are based on Afro-American Gospel tunes. These include Roll De ol' Chariot (SATBB, 1955), My ways are cloudy (SATB, 1955), De ol' Arks A movering (SATBB, 1955) and De Angels Are Watchin (SATBB, 1958). The thematic ingredients of these works (that is Afro-American tunes) share the use of African derived modal, especially the pentatonic, scales with the thematic elements of the organ works. While, however, the melodies of Sowande's organ works are generally hymnlike in character the Afro-American tunes used in his choral works are characterised by a lively rhythmic character since they (as gospel songs and spirituals) had been originally composed for use in the African inspired Christian Churches among the Blacks in the United States.

The difference between the characteristic features of the thematic ingredients of the organ works and the choral works is symbolic of the stylistic gap between the two categories of works. As exemplified in the Oyigiyigi and Kyrie, Sowande's organ works are often characterised by detailed attention to motivic development, the use of intricate European formal procedures, especially the fugue, and the use of an explorative and

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(1) See Chapters 6 and 8.

relatively complex harmonic-tonal language. On the other hand the choral works show a higher patronage of African music in the use of elements such as call and response patterns and the evocation of the principle of collective improvisation as will be shown in Chapter 6.

It is important to view Sowande's conception and realisation of his nationalist principles within the confines of his educational and professional training as well as the larger socio-cultural and political climate of Nigeria during the active period of his compositional career (1940-1960). His stated objective to compose works which are conceptually and structurally relevant to his African background does not contradict the general wind of nationalism blowing across Nigeria in the 1940s and 1950s; the actual realisation of that object is defined by his own musical upbringing. Although he was born in Nigeria and remained there before going to England in 1934, European rather than African music dominated his professional training both in Nigeria and in England. It is therefore not surprising that Sowande's views on nationalism are, despite his commitment to them, still marked by a characteristic open-mindedness. He believes in the philosophy of cultural reciprocity and argues against what he calls "apartheid in art". According to him:

"We are not prepared to submit to the doctrine of apartheid in art by which a musician is expected to work only within the limits of his traditional forms of music".

He therefore warns against

"uncontrolled nationalism in which case nationals of any one country may forget that they are all members of one human family"<sup>(1)</sup>

with other nationals. Closely linked with his philosophy of cultural reciprocity is a belief in the principle of cultural pluralism. It is on

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(1) Sowande, F. "Nigerian music and musician then and now"  
Unpublished manuscript, p.89.

this basis that he divides a society's music into different categories.

According to him:

"Where the organisation of the raw materials of sound (into socially sanctioned and meaningful formal and structural patterns) in a society, over a long time in the far distant past, is anonymous, then we have the folk music of that society intimately related to that society's day to day life."

However,

"When known individual members of a society begin to organise the raw materials into formal and structural patterns, consciously and deliberately, then each of these individuals presents his society with what, for ease of reference, we may term the society's new music."

The modern composer according to Sowande can go outside his own tradition to borrow elements from other musical traditions, the result of which he calls "the fine Art in music of that society". This new Art is also divisible into two categories:

"European forms used without reference to Nigerian elements in the music (and those that fuse) European forms with one aspect or another of Nigerian, African or Afro-American music. We regard these two main types of compositions as valid.<sup>(1)</sup>

Sowande's compositional style has reflected this duality, and African elements do not feature in all his music. In Because of you (soprano solo and piano, 1954), Songs of Contemplation (tenor voice and orchestra, 1955) and Out of Zion (SATB and organ, 1955) for example, Sowande retains his romantic heritage in the harmonic language, and these choral pieces lack the folk elements of his organ works.

Considering the influence of the Church on the professional career of Sowande, it is not surprising that many of his compositions have a

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(1) Sowande, F. "The development of a National tradition of music" A paper presented at a seminar organised by the Department of Music, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1965. pp.60-61.

religious association. For example, the theme on which his Oyigiyigi is based is a Yoruba salute to God while his Prayer is based on a theme of supplication. Church anthems such as St. Jude's Response (Satb with organ, 1959), Oh Render Thanks (hymn anthem Satb with organ, 1960) and Out of Zion (Satb with organ, 1955) reflect another aspect of Sowande's religious compositions. While the organ works use Yoruba-Anglican choral tunes, the anthems to religious texts are set to original music. His predilection for compositions which have a religious association however also emanates from a fundamental belief which takes its root from African traditional culture. Music in Yoruba land is used in religious worship to invoke ancestral and deified spirits, to transform man from his actual, materialistic world to an imagined, spiritual plane. This function represents the most profound role of music in traditional Yoruba world. Sowande's belief in this religious function of music is summarised in his statement that:

"Whereas on the social level (music) communicates with the men and women of the society on the ritualistic and religious levels it communicates with the gods and the goddess of the group's pantheon with the forces of nature which it impresses into the service of the group through their priests and seers.

He continues:

What the contemporary African has lost - if Nigeria is indicative - is the recognition and acceptance of the metaphysical correspondence through which sound can become for us - as it was for our traditional man - creative and evocatory. In the absence of this it is futile to talk about 'language in music'." (1)

The influence of Yoruba religious music on Sowande's compositional style goes beyond the level of its conception. Although the incorporation of the dynamic, rhythmic character of African music is strongly reflected in his orchestral works (such as the African Suite), his organ works (such as Gloria, Kyrie and Oba aba ke pe) are marked by an expressive quality

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(1) Ibid, p.67.

that derives from their legato character. It is not in all cases that African music makes use of pulsating and dance-like rhythms. African vocal music does sometimes possess a very expressive and very melodic character. Sowande believes that it is in such features that the best expressions of Yoruba music are to be found and they are usually restricted to music used in religious rituals. According to him:

"African music is popularly supposed to consist, in the main, of red-hot drum rhythms and wild tunes which must be called melodies for want of a more appropriate term. It needs to be stressed, therefore, that there are melodies in Nigeria, properly so called, which would compare favourably with anything found outside Nigeria on every level. While many of these melodies pulsate with keen and arresting rhythms, others are solemn chants which use no drum-rhythms at all and approximate more closely to the Catholic plain-chant than to any other type of music."<sup>(1)</sup>

To Sowande therefore the musical legacy of the Anglican Church does not represent any fundamental difference or change from the nature and the role of music in traditional religious worship: the use of music for the purpose of communion with God in the Church represents a continuity of, rather than a break from, traditional African norms. It is this belief which accounts for the conception of Sowande's religious works and the fact that virtually all his major organ pieces are based on the Yoruba-Anglican pentatonic melodies.<sup>(2)</sup>

But Sowande's style shows influences from diverse sources. These include nineteenth century European harmony, Highlife and jazz idioms, Yoruba-Anglican liturgical music and Yoruba traditional music. These sources reflect the diverse nature of his professional activities: a church organist; a band leader who played Highlife in Nigeria in the 1930s and jazz in London and a researcher and collector of Nigerian traditional music.

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(1) Preface to Prayer Ricordi and Co., New York, 1958, p.1.

(2) See Appendix, p. 333.



His patronage of nineteenth century European music occurs mainly in the realm of harmony and in the use of folklorist elements. His use of form, however, generally remains within the bounds of classical practice rotably in the use of sonata, fugue and theme and variation.

It is important to note in any study of Sowande's works that he was able to reconcile his own objective as a composer (to write works which have an African character) with his desire to be part of the tradition of European classical music. In other words, although his works have been influenced by the nationalist tradition of European nineteenth century music the use and the choice of stylistic materials in his works are often guided by his nationalist considerations. For example although his harmonic language maintains affinity with the late nineteenth century European style in its use of dissonant-contrapuntal textures, it has a conceptual relationship with the harmonic principles of African music. The adoption of this particular harmonic style is often conditioned by Sowande's own interpretation of African music and his desire to incorporate that interpretation into his works. This point will be clearer as we expand on it in the discussion of works in Chapters 6 and 8.

Sowande's compositions can be grouped under six main categories which reflect the diversified nature of his professional career. These are:

- 1) Folk song arrangements;
- 2) Organ works;
- 3) Sacred choral works;
- 4) Solo Art songs;
- 5) "Afro-American" choral works; and
- 6) Orchestral works.

A general survey of these works from his early arrangements such as the Three Yoruba Songs to his last major work - the Folk Symphony reveals that African nationalism continues to recur in the conception of most of Sowande's compositions. But manifestations of this objective often differ from one work to another. For example, although most of his major organ works are based on Yoruba melodies, the treatment of the melodies often takes one of three forms. Thus in works such as Oyigiyigi and Kyrie the melodies are presented within harmonic and formal contexts which are predominantly European. In a work like Gloria, European and African techniques co-dominate while in Ka' mura and Prayer the treatment of themes reflects a predominantly African approach.<sup>(1)</sup>

Sowande's contributions to the development of modern Nigerian music, both through research and composition, have been well acknowledged. In 1956 he was honoured with an M.B.E. for "distinguished services in the cause of music"; with an M.F.N. (Member of the Federation of Nigeria) in 1964; with a Chieftaincy title, Babagbile of Lagos, in 1968, and an honorary doctorate degree in music by the University of Ife in 1972. He relinquished his post as Professor of Musicology at the University of Ibadan in 1968, when he left Nigeria for America where, between 1968 and 1972, he was Professor of African studies and research program at Howard University, Washington D.C. From 1972 to 1987 he was Professor of Musicology at the University of Pittsburgh. He died, in March 1987, at the age of eighty two.

Sowande's style marks only the beginning of an era in the history of Modern Nigerian Art music. Although his ideas on nationalism provided a working premise for the composers who came after him those ideas are now regarded as being too cautious and restrictive to

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(1) See Chapter 6.

help bring about a National tradition of Nigerian Modern music. African idioms must be used in greater abundance in modern works both from a conceptual and structural perspective for an authentic national tradition to emerge. The greatest advocate of this objective is AKIN EUBA.<sup>(1)</sup>

Like Sowande, Akin Euba's ideas on the need for African composers to maintain a strong link with traditional African music have been reflected both in his compositions and research work. Clear parallels therefore often occur between his writings and his compositional practice. The writings show Euba's strong commitment, far beyond that of any of his colleagues, to a search for a contemporary African idiom of Art music which will be reflective of, and relevant to, contemporary African society. In one such writing he stated that:

"as a participant in the new Fine Art music (in Nigeria, he) has been puzzled for a long time in his search for a style of composition which would distinctly reflect his cultural heritage and which would be a natural extension of this heritage.... Having been brought up primarily in the Western tradition and being all too aware of the force with which this tradition is encroaching upon native culture, this writer has felt the need not only for a preservation of his Country's folk tradition, but for a logical direction of the processes of acculturation in such a manner that their products will be not a severance from but a continuation of the past."<sup>(2)</sup>

Euba's search for an authentic idiom of modern African Art music has been exemplified in a variety of ways and as the discussion below will show, they are usually products of valid interpretations of the principles governing the organisation of traditional African music.

Euba was born on the 28th April 1935, in Lagos, and was formally introduced to Western music by his father who was a pianist. Akin Euba

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- (1) For an introductory study on the life and works of Akin Euba, see Uzoigwe, J. Akin Euba: An introduction to the life and works of a Nigerian composer. Op. cit.
- (2) Euba, A. "Preface to a study of Nigerian music" Ibadan, Vol.21, 1965, p.53.

later attended the C.M.S. Grammar School (now Anglican Grammar School), Lagos, where he continued lessons in the rudiments of European music. In addition Euba had private piano lessons from Major J.C. Allen, a colonial administrator in Lagos, and a man to whom Euba would later dedicate his piano work Scenes from Traditional Life (1970). These initial musical experiences are significant. He made rapid progress at playing the piano, winning in 1950, a medal at a competition organised by the Ministry of Culture. According to Euba:

"From 1950 things improved after I won my first Silver Medal at the Nigerian Festival of the arts. This turned me from an obscure member of the School to a kind of star. This small recognition of my achievements may have reinforced my progress towards a musical career."<sup>(1)</sup>

On Major Allen's recommendation, Euba secured a Government Scholarship in 1952 to study music at Trinity College, London. Here he studied harmony and counterpoint under Eric Taylor, composition under Arnold Cooke (a former pupil of Paul Hindemith) obtaining his FTCL (piano, 1957) and FTCL (composition, 1957). Euba's compositional career started at Trinity College where he wrote his orchestral piece, Introduction and Allegro, (1956) and the String Quartet (1957). In both works he experimented with atonality.

Euba returned to Nigeria in 1957 to join the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation as a producer in the Music and Music Research Unit. It was during his stay at the N.B.C. that he began to develop a research interest in traditional Nigerian music. He recorded and produced for broadcast, various traditional music performances from different parts of Yoruba land. When, in 1962, Euba was awarded a Rockefeller Foundation Scholarship to study in the United States he opted for ethnomusicology at the University of California where in 1966 he obtained an M.A. degree.

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(1) Uzoigwe, Ibid, p. 18.

Euba's compositions written between 1959 and 1960 reveal the influence of his new interest in traditional Yoruba music: the use of Yoruba melodies and rhythmic idiom are vividly shown in his Six Yoruba Songs (1959), Two Yoruba Folk Songs (1959), The Wanderer (for violin, cello and piano, 1960).<sup>(1)</sup> It was however not until he arrived at the University of California that he started experimenting with the use of traditional African instruments. At UCLA, he came in contact with his teacher, Roy Travis, an American composer who himself has composed works such as the African Sonata (piano, 1966) and Collage for Orchestra (1968) in which African rhythmic idioms are greatly featured. Euba also took courses, which widened his horizons, on the elements of traditional African music and the possibilities of their incorporation into his works. According to him:

"The atmosphere at UCLA was very suitable for composers wishing to experiment with non- Western resources. We not only had theoretical courses in several of the World's musical cultures but also had actual ensembles from these cultures in which we would play... My studies at UCLA indicated to me in what ways I, as a composer seeking to develop an African idiom, could proceed. I became aware for the first time that one of the most important methods by which I could Africanize my works was to employ African traditional instruments."<sup>(2)</sup>

The immediate results of this experience are shown in his Three Yoruba Songs (for baritone and Iya-ilu, 1963), Igi nla so (for piano and four Yoruba drums, 1963), Four pieces (for African Orchestra, 1966) and Olurombi (for symphony orchestra, 1967). In all these works, Euba explores the rhythmic nuances of traditional Yoruba music in combination with a twentieth century European atonality.

The use of an atonal harmonic texture to present African rhythmic elements is not simply an attempt by Euba to identify himself with a

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(1) For a list of Euba's works, see the Appendix, p.334.

(2) Uzoigwe, J. Op. cit. p.23.

twentieth century European tradition. It represents a reinterpretation of a stylistic tendency of traditional Yoruba music. As we shall see in Chapter 6, Euba's experiments in works such as Three Yoruba Songs and Igi nla so are based on an interpretation which sees Yoruba drum music as having a quasi-atonal quality. In addition, the use of tone-rows (as exemplified in the works of Arnold Schoenberg) is a principle also inherent in the organisation of Yoruba drum music.<sup>(1)</sup> As Euba has told this writer, the use of atonality in his works is conditioned by the fact of its compatibility with the principles of Yoruba drum music.<sup>(2)</sup>

While the use of traditional instruments is an interesting development, it brings with it a particular problem. With the present state of Music Scholarship in Nigeria there is as yet no music school that emphasises the teaching of traditional instruments. As a result literate musicians who can play traditional instruments are indeed very few. This means that works such as Igi nla so which make use of traditional instruments rarely get performed in the form in which they exist in the score. This is because traditional musicians who can play those traditional instruments used in the works cannot read music.

It is, however, important to explain how Euba has tried to overcome this problem. In some of his piano works written after Igi nla so, he abandoned the use of traditional instruments, relying on the piano alone to capture and evoke the rhythmic, melodic and the harmonic textures of traditional Yoruba music. The works in which this new experiment takes place include Four Pieces from Oyo Calabashes (1964), Saturday Night at Caban Bamboo (1964) and Scenes from Traditional Life (1970). Euba's use of the piano to evoke the textures of traditional African music is based on the concept of African pianism which he has evolved himself. This

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(1) See Chapter 7.

(2) Personal conversation with Akin Euba : Ile-Ife, April 1985; London, July 1986.

concept defines a compositional approach through which the piano can be used to evoke the rhythmic, textural and formal characteristics of traditional African instrumental music. In addition, Euba believes that capturing the essence and the spirit of traditional African music is more important than a mere use of traditional folk tunes. According to him:

"It is true that (African modern) composers have often attempted to Africanise their works by making use of African tunes and rhythms, but in their preoccupation with Western forms such borrowings have been quite minimal and their works must be regarded as an extension of Western Art music rather than a continuation of the African tradition in music."<sup>(1)</sup>

It is not that European elements should be discouraged in modern African works, but they should not suppress the African features used in such works. Thus he does not:

"advocate a total insulation of African music from foreign influences since such influences are often enriching, provided they are compatible with and do not tend to dominate the native tradition."<sup>(2)</sup>

Despite the strength of African idioms in such works as Igi nla so and Olurombi, Euba's most nationalist works were not composed until the late 1960s and early 1970s.

In 1966, after the completion of his masters degree at UCLA he took up an appointment with the University of Lagos as lecturer in the music department. A year later, while still at Lagos University, he registered as a part-time doctoral student at the University of Legon, Ghana, where, in 1974, he obtained his Ph.D degree in ethnomusicology after submitting a thesis on Yoruba dundun music.<sup>(3)</sup> From 1967 onwards

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(1) Euba, A. "Traditional element as the basis of new African Art music" African Urban Notes, 1970, Vol. X, Pt.IV, pp.52-53.

(2) Ibid, p.53.

(3) Euba, A. Dundun music of the Yorubas : Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Legon, 1974.

there was a drastic change in Euba's approach to composition, In 1967 Euba left the University of Lagos for the University of Ife, a place renowned for its interest in Nigerian Cultural heritage. Located in the mythical origin of the Yorubas-Ile-Ife - the University has initiated important research into different aspects of Nigerian culture. The Institute of African studies, the University's main organ for this cultural objective, has among its different sections those of Music, Dance and Drama. In addition to research, this institute also lays emphasis on the practical aspects of those sections. Regular presentations of performances occur in the University's Oduduwa Hall. Euba worked as a Research Fellow in this institute and also supervised a student cultural centre, Ori Olokun. Euba's stay at this University resulted in his re-examination of his initial ideas as to how a modern African composer can satisfy the aesthetic needs of contemporary African society. This has in turn resulted in compositions which are significantly different from his earlier works. In an article written in 1970, Euba expresses certain important ideas which form the basis of his change of approach to composition. Instead of writing works which only make use of African elements within a predominantly European structural context, African composers who genuinely want to maintain strong links with African culture in their works should take a closer look at the principles governing African traditional music. According to him:

"Compositions written by Africans ... even when (they have) ... utilised elements of African music have generally conformed to European ideals to such a degree that the African elements have been overshadowed by the Western. The influences at work here are so forceful that the music produced must be regarded as representing an almost total rejection of African norms. On the other hand, by judicious selection, African composers can leave themselves open to foreign influences which are so peripheral in nature that the core of their music retains its identity. (For example) Africans can accept the idea of a new music designed for aesthetic listening without necessarily committing themselves to using foreign materials in the creation of this music."<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) Ibid. p.54.



Works written by Euba which "accept the idea of a new music designed for aesthetic listening" but which do not use much European elements include Dirges for speakers, singers and Nigerian instruments (1972), Two Tortoise Folk Tales, for speakers and Nigerian instruments (1975), Morning, Noon and Night, a dance drama for Nigerian instruments (1967) and The Alatangana, a dance drama for Nigerian instruments (1971). These works were composed while Euba was at the Institute of African studies, University of Ife. Since most of the performers could not read music they were conceptualised on an oral basis. This approach naturally removed the initial problem which Euba had in performing his earlier works such as Three Yoruba Songs, which make use of dundun drums. According to Euba, composers could adopt this approach while the training of African musicians (who will be able to play traditional instruments from notation) goes on.

It is necessary to mention that the success of these works has been remarkable. The reception given to the works each time they are performed both within and outside Nigeria has given Euba the encouragement to continue with works along these lines. Apart from the use of traditional instruments in them, they reflect certain important and basic features of traditional African music: flexibility and spontaneity in performance and the integration of music, dance and drama. They also often carry a quasi-utilitarian character. For example, by using poems which have a political theme in Chaka (1970), Euba is able to adumbrate the African tradition in which a musical performance also performs an extra-musical function. Chaka, for soloists, chorus and ensemble of traditional African instruments, makes use of a text based on a dramatic poem about a famous nineteenth century Zulu warrior dedicated to the Bantu Martyrs of South Africa. The poem was written by Leopold Senghor, former President of Senegal. The work was first performed at the Ife Festival of the Arts University of Ife in 1970 and was later presented at a command performance in the presence of Leopold Senghor in Dakar in 1972. The third performance of the work attended by

this writer was in London, at Brent Town Hall, in 1986. Since an absolute score does not exist, each time the work is performed it takes a slightly different form. The wide reception and commendation which Euba's orally conceived works receive both within and outside Nigeria is illustrated in the successful presentations of Alatangana. Like Chaka the work was taken abroad - to France - after many performances at Ife and Ibadan and was performed during the 1972 International Festival of the Arts in Nancy. Its enthusiastic reception is summarised by critic. Yoland Thiriet, in "Le Journal de Nancy":

"The performance is a result of a choreographic effort of a high order. Modern melodies and rhythms revitalize the traditional repertoire to produce a means of unique richness. At first sight the performance is folkloric. But its depth is not lost on the attentive spectator for long. For the traditional aspect is carried by an under-current of marks of masterful technicality... The complexity of the performance runs the risk of being distracting. But its richness of rhythm, its diversity and its pageantry are sufficiently arresting and win our attention."(1)

Like other works in its category the musical conception of Alatangana is aleatoric. As Euba has said:

"Essentially I gave the barest of directions to the performers about the kind of music they should play. Then I let them to play at will without synchronizing their rhythms. So every time this dance-drama is played the music is different."(2)

Despite the success of these orally-conceived works, Euba realizes their limitations. One major problem is that there is a limit to which his own creative intentions can be portrayed by performers (the traditional Africans) who generally fall back on their own knowledge and judgement in presenting his (Euba's) ideas.

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(1) Translated in the Editorial: "Alatangana" African Arts, 1972, p.46.

(2) Glenn, L. "Music to think about Africa by" Musical America, August 1972, p.29.

Thus, although originally orally conceived, his Abiku No. 2, for three-part choir and five Nigerian instruments, (1968), was later scored. The decision to score the work highlights Euba's dilemma and continuous search for an appropriate medium in which to present his creative intentions, since he had to resort once again to the use of notation in a work written for African instruments. The score of Abiku No. 2, however, is significant in that it shows the ingenuity of Euba in capturing and redirecting the compositional techniques of traditional Yoruba music to suit a contemplative presentation. By scoring the work, Euba has provided us with an opportunity to examine the main compositional features of his orally-conceived works, since the work Abiku represents a written example of the techniques employed in the conception of the orally-based works. Apart from the use of Yoruba drumming procedures, central to the conception of Abiku, and illustrated in Chapter 7, is:

"The exploitation of the tonal characteristics of African languages to produce a kind of music in which speech tones without being turned into melodies having discrete pitches assume musical importance in their own right and could be used multi-linearly."<sup>(1)</sup>

Euba's experiments at fusing European and African elements are typified by a commitment and articulation which exceed that of any other Nigerian composer; and the musical realizations of his ideas are guided by a personal style noted for its intellectual depth and maturity. An analysis of Euba's works can be found in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

One of the younger generation of Nigerian composers who has been significantly influenced by Akin Euba is Joshua Uzoigwe. Although his works are still relatively few,<sup>(2)</sup> and although his prominence as a

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(1) Euba, A. "Traditional elements as the basis of New African elements" Op. Cit. p.55.

(2) See Appendix, p. 335 for a list of Uzoigwe's works.

composer in the country is far less than that of the other composers whose works are being discussed in this thesis, his compositions are often characterised by a radical and sometimes successful approach to the use of traditional Nigerian elements. He was born on January 1st, 1946 and unlike Sowande and Euba does not come from a family of musicians. He received his primary and secondary education at the International School University at Ibadan and Kings College, Lagos, respectively. His pre-primary school life was, however, spent in his village, Ogidi, Anambra state, where he took an active part in traditional wrestling, masquerade and moonlight musical plays.

Like Euba, his time at secondary school was characterised by a strong desire to study European music. In 1960, his first year at King's College, he joined the school choir which was directed by Major Allen, Euba's former piano teacher. Major Allen also gave Uzoigwe piano lessons. On the completion of his secondary school education in 1970, Uzoigwe went to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, to take a diploma course in music. It was during his stay at Nsukka that his compositional career began. While he was there he wrote, mainly, songs which included the Four Igbo Songs (for soprano and piano, 1972) and Two Igbo Songs (for soprano and piano, 1973). These works clearly demonstrate Uzoigwe's knowledge of the nuances of Igbo vocal music in their harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment and in the melodic pitches of the vocal part.<sup>(1)</sup>

On the completion of the diploma course at the University of Nigeria in 1973, he went to Trinity College, London, where he studied piano, clarinet and composition. While at Trinity College, he wrote three works: Four Nigerian Dances (for piano, 1976); Lustra Variations (for piano, 1976) and Sketches (for piano, 1977). Like the piano works of Akin Euba, these works are characterised by a fusion of twentieth century European atonality

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(1) See Chapter 9.

with African (Igbo) rhythmic procedures. Like Euba, Uzoigwe also believes that the use of a tone row is not fundamentally different from the procedures of Igbo instrumental music in which specific number of tones can be assigned to certain instruments in an ensemble.<sup>(1)</sup> Although Uzoigwe was yet to undertake his study on Akin Euba for his M.A. degree at Belfast, he had come across Euba's works earlier, together with those of Bankole, during the 1964 Nigerian Festival of Arts and Culture in Lagos. Despite the stylistic affinity between Uzoigwe's works and those of Euba, they reflect a distinctive and personal style. Uzoigwe's approach to the evocation of the rhythmic and melodic textures of Igbo instrumental music in these works reflects his intimacy with traditional Igbo music as well as a radical way of re-expressing traditional elements within a new socio-musical context. A discussion of these piano works can be found in Chapter 7.

Uzoigwe obtained a GTCL diploma in 1977 after which he went to the Queen's University of Belfast to study ethnomusicology. For his M.A. programme at Belfast he wrote his dissertation on Akin Euba.<sup>(2)</sup> Asked why he chose a study on Euba he replied that:

"I have spent three quarters of my professional career studying European music. I felt it was time I studied the works of a senior colleague of mine who has similar compositional intentions as me. The choice eventually fell on Euba not only because our lives have crossed each other before but also because our lives have similar patterns."<sup>(3)</sup>

That Uzoigwe, like Euba, reassessed his approach to composition as a result of his ethnomusicological studies at Belfast is not surprising. He had initially defined Modern African Art music as:

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- (1) See Chapter 7 for an illustration of this principle.
  - (2) Uzoigwe, J. Op. cit.
  - (3) Expressed in an Interview with me. See appendix, p.339.

"a literary distillation or better still an invocation of certain features that are characteristic of traditional African music by literary African composers with or without the inclusion of other musical elements from other cultures outside the continent."<sup>(1)</sup>

One of the most important problems that any African composer has to consider is how much outside elements can be integrated in their works which aim at maintaining strong links with traditional African music. Thus while he had used African elements in his earlier works, such as Lustra Variations and Sketches, the fact that they were written for the piano and not for traditional African instruments is to Uzoigwe indicative of their limited African character. As a result he moved to writing works which make use of African instruments. During his study at Belfast he composed Masquerade (for Iya-ilu and piano, 1980) and Ritual Procession (for African Orchestra, 1981). In both works there is an element of aleatoric. While at Trinity College, Uzoigwe had listened to aleatoric works by the Polish composer, Witold Lutoslawski, including his Second Symphony, and had seen the possibility of using the same procedure to imitate the improvisatory feature of African music. While his Masquerade was born entirely out of improvisation, in his Ritual Procession he constructs fifty-two melo-rhythmic cells to be played by as many instruments as possible in a quasi-canonic style. The eventual number and type of instruments is left to the choice of the performers. The different melo-rhythmic figures in the piece are of different densities and the result of their combination is a multi-layered melo-rhythmic texture. As in traditional music, Uzoigwe provides the Okele-rhythm<sup>(2)</sup> to act as a reference pattern for the remaining participating instruments. The use of this reference pattern in this and other works, such as Four Nigerian Dances, is based on Uzoigwe's belief that it

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(1) Ibid.

(2) See Chapter 3, Ex. 1.

constitutes one of the most important features of traditional drumming technique. According to him:

"the presence of an instrument in the role of a metronome in traditional music emphasises the tendency for man to associate time with space. The monotony that could result from a consistent repetition of a phrase refrain is often subdued by the situational musical activity and other social elements such as audience participation..."(1)

However, in the absence of a participating audience for modern art works, the constant reiteration of the "metronome phrase" could be monotonous. One way in which this could be avoided would be to increase the range of musical elements. This is something Uzoigwe tries to achieve in the Ritual Procession. He tries to capture the socio-musical event of the traditional yearly Masquerade Festival of his native Igbo land during which different ensembles perform different types of music. This accounts for the use of an unlimited type and number of instruments. According to him the very wide range of musical elements distracts from the monotonous rhythmic reiteration by the pulse maker.

Uzoigwe has, however, not completely abandoned the use of European instruments in his compositions. His most recent works, Oja (a wind quintet, 1982) and Watermaid (for soprano and orchestra, 1983), are scored for European instruments. Here European instruments imitate the melo-rhythmic quality of traditional instruments. In Watermaid for example, both the flute and the clarinet are given melodic lines which are idiomatic of the traditional Igbo flute - Oja. In addition as we shall see in Chapter 8, the atonal style used in the early piano work Sketches, for example, is abandoned for an harmonic context in which tonality is affirmed not by conventional progressions but through referential and periodic appearances of a key centre. The fact that Uzoigwe goes back to using

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(1) A view also expressed in the same interview.

European instruments in Watermaid can be seen in the same context as Euba's re-adoption of the piano to evoke African rhythmic procedures in the Scenes from Traditional Life. Since there is a lack of literate musicians to perform works written for traditional instruments, the use of European instruments to represent elements of traditional music is an option that Nigerian composers will continue to take. One of the immediate plans of Uzoigwe, who now teaches music at the University of Ife, is to help reinforce the efforts being made in Nigerian music departments at colleges and universities to emphasise the teaching of traditional instruments in the curriculum. Unless, and until, this is done successfully, works such as the Ritual Procession will remain as archive material.

While Uzoigwe has adopted a style similar to that of Akin Euba, Ayo Bankole followed the cautious approach of Fela Sowande although later in his career he also, like Euba, saw the need to lessen the stylistic bond between his works and European classical music. Like Sowande, he maintains close links with European conventional practice in the use of forms and formal procedures such as the sonata, the fugue and the cantata. Despite the relationship between his works and those of Sowande, Bankole's style is defined by a personal approach to reinterpreting elements of traditional Yoruba music and their fusion with European idioms. Thus although his harmonic style generally remains within the bounds of tonality, it is frequently characterised by features such as whole-tone scales, modality, the interval of the tritone and an excessive use of chromaticism often within a tonal language defined through repetition and emphasis rather than orthodox harmonic procedures. The affinity between these features and the impressionistic and folklorist works of Debussy and Bartók is clear. But their use in Bankole's music is also often governed by considerations which emanate from nationalist intentions.



The analysis of his works in Chapters 7, 9, 10 and 11 clarifies this point.

Bankole's career follows a similar pattern to that of Sowande - the Church being the most important factor in his creative outputs. Born in 1935, in Lagos, his father was the organist of St. Peter's Church, Faji (in Lagos) while his mother taught music at a secondary school in Ede, Western Nigeria. The musical family into which he was born provided the necessary encouragement for the beginning of a musical career that was to produce one of Nigeria's leading composers. On his father's suggestion he became a chorister and a student under Phillips at Christ Church, Lagos. In the same year, 1945, he entered the Baptist Academy Secondary School (also in Lagos) where, in addition, he received music lessons. In 1954 he became a clerical officer at the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation and it was there that he met Fela Sowande who gave him advanced organ lessons. Bankole's contact with the most important African composer of the day, at that stage of his career, is significant. Sowande's works, in their nationalist orientations, provided immediate motivation and inspiration for Bankole. By the time he was leaving for the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, in 1957, he had started to compose, including two piano works, Nigerian Suite and Ja Orule.<sup>(1)</sup> Like the organ works of Sowande, some of which Bankole had already played, these pieces make use of simple Yoruba folk tunes and rhythmic patterns. In their modally inflected harmonies, pedal notes and ostinati<sup>(2)</sup> important stylistic features were established, and they recur continuously in his works.

During the three years that Bankole attended the Guildhall School of Music and Drama he studied piano, composition and organ for the G.G.S.M. - the graduate diploma in teaching. In 1961, having distinguished himself as

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(1) See the Appendix for a list of Bankole's works.

(2) See Chapter 7.

an organist, he was awarded a Scholarship to study organ at Clare College, Cambridge. He graduated with a B.A. in 1964 (turning it into an M.A. three years later). In addition, Bankole also obtained the F.R.C.O. in 1964. Bankole's greater exposure to the works of European composers while in England and his insight into Yoruba music are reflected in the wide range of experiments present in his works of this period. His compositions over these six years include three piano sonatas: Christmas Sonata (1959); The Passion (1959) and English Winterbirds (1961); a cantata: Baba Se wa in Omo rere (father make us good children), for female choir and chamber orchestra (1958); solo songs: Three Yoruba Songs (for baritone and piano, 1959); part songs: Three Part Songs (for female choir, 1959) and an organ work: Toccata and Fugue (1960).

Two points about these works are significant. Firstly they represent the most popular of Bankole's works in Nigeria today, and secondly the range of styles presented in them reveals Bankole's eclectic approach to composition. For example, in the Three Yoruba Songs is the juxtaposition of sharply contrasting styles. While the first song, Iya, maintains close links with nineteenth century lied in the use of its predominantly diatonic harmonies, recurring accompanimental patterns and spontaneous appeal, the second and third are striking in their use of impressionist-coloured dissonant intervals - especially the tritone and major seconds - to weaken and temporarily suspend the background tonality.<sup>(1)</sup> Contrasting vividly with the tonal language of works such as the Passion Sonata and English Winterbirds is the atonal language of the Toccata and Fugue. The juxtapositions of elements which are inherently opposed to each other often occurs within a single work and (as will be seen in the analysis of the Passion Sonata in Chapter 7) this is not always successful. Bankole's use of diverse materials within a work often stems from his efforts to fuse

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(1) See Chapter 7.

elements of traditional Yoruba with those of European music. Thus the quasi-bitonal language of Ja Itanna to'n tan, the second of the Three Yoruba Songs, derives from the juxtaposition of the inflectionary tonal quality of Yoruba vocal style with an harmonic style noted for its lavish use of chromaticism.

On the completion of his course at Cambridge in 1964, Bankole went to the University of California to study ethnomusicology. There he also met Roy Travis, and, like Euba, it was during his stay at UCLA that he considered writing works which would explore the use of traditional instruments and group improvisation. The two works conceived along these lines were Ethnophony (for traditional African instruments, 1964) and Jona (for narrators, singers, dancers and traditional instruments, 1964). Again, like Euba and Uzoigwe, Bankole's experiment along these lines was to be short lived. On his return to Nigeria in 1966, he went back to writing works that could be easily recreated in performances through notation. Although he was a senior music producer at the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation in Lagos from 1966-1969 and later lecturer in music at the University of Lagos from 1969-1976, when he died, he was actively involved with choral societies in Lagos. They included the Musico-Cultural Society and the Lagos Musical Societies, for both of which he was musical director. It is therefore not surprising that most of the works written by him at this period were vocal pieces. They included Adura fun Alafia (Prayer for Peace), for soprano solo and piano (1969); Ore ofe Jesu Krist (the Grace of Jesus Christ) for unaccompanied choir (1967); Fun mi ni beji No.I (Give me Twins) for unaccompanied choir (1970); Fun mi in beji, No.II (1970) and Ona Ara (Mysterious Ways), for full chorus, soloists, organ and Yoruba instruments (1970). The most significant feature of these works is that, in them, Bankole abandoned the relatively complex, harmonic and formal character of works, such as Toccata and Fugue and English Winterbirds, for a simple folk-inspired style. Such a compositional decision was necessary since these works were written

for amateur choirs whose audience was mainly drawn from the Christian community in Nigeria noted for its conservative musical taste. Despite their simplicity the music is characterised by a fine taste, which reflects Bankole's ability to achieve a successful and satisfying effect through simple material. Like his early vocal works, such as the Three Part Songs, these works are characterised by a fusion of Yoruba-inflectionary tonal patterns with European conceived harmonies. In Fun mi ni'beji, No. I and Ore ofe Jesu Kristi melodic lines which are word borne are treated polyphonically.

Like Sowande, Bankole's compositions are not always conceived to present elements of African music. In a preface to Toccata and Fugue, one of his most Europeanised works, Bankole wrote that:

"no conscious effort is made to inject African traditional styles ... and if these are felt their roles should not be exaggerated."<sup>(1)</sup>

As the composer admits, the influence of Max Reger is felt in the Toccata and Fugue especially regarding the use of chord clusters. In addition, the emotional temper of the piece is suggested by Liszt's Prelude and Fugue on B-A-C-H, which he played frequently in the period shortly before he composed the work. Bankole's patronage of European conventional procedures is, however, clearly shown not only in the formal conception of the Toccata and Fugue but also in the use of periodic and symmetric phrases and traditional process of motivic development. In its use of conventional European elements, the work maintains strong links with some of the significant works of the "Second Viennese School", for example, Schoenberg's Pierrot lunaire which, despite its atonal character, still contains residual tonal features and conventional formal patterns. It must however be pointed out that a work like the Toccata and Fugue constitutes an

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(1) Preface: Toccata and Fugue, University of Ife Press, 1978.

exception rather than the rule. The need to fuse European and African elements represents the most important basis for his compositions and it is an element which dominates his entire compositional career. In no other work is the syncretic basis of his works more sharply focused than in his last major work, the Festac Cantata for chorus, soloists, wind orchestra and Nigerian traditional instruments (1974). This work represents a summary of Bankole's compositional style since virtually all the diverse elements of his previous works are combined in it.<sup>(1)</sup> The combination of European and traditional instruments, the juxtapositions of diatonic, tonally conceived, harmonies and atonal textures, the use of Yoruba inspired modal (harmonic and melodic) procedures and harmonic-tonal features which suggest an affinity with Bartók and Debussy are all used within a work which symbolises the pervading eclecticism in Bankole's compositional output.

Clearly contrasting with Bankole's wide ranging experiments is the strong homogeneous element of Samuel Akpabot's compositional style. Virtually all his works are typified by a recurring approach in which elements of Highlife music combined with those of his traditional culture, Ibibio, are fused with the basic features of European tradition. Often rejecting the expressionist, even avantgarde style of Euba, and the nineteenth century European heritage of Sowande, Akpabot's strong reliance on Highlife and the Ibibio traditions are symptomatic of a personal vision of the role which Nigerian and modern African composers should perform in society.

Samual Akpabot was born on 3rd October, 1932, in Uyo, in the Cross River State. At the age of eleven he came to Lagos for his education at

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(1) See an analysis of this work in Chapter 11.

King's College, a school often referred to as the "Eton of Nigeria" and where tuition in European music is emphasised. It was, however, in the Church that Akpabot received the most significant introduction to European music. He was a chorister at Christ Church Cathedral, Lagos, under Phillips. According to Akpabot "it was in Christ Church that I was introduced to a great deal of European masterpieces; I sang all of them before going to England and that turned out to be a very great advantage."<sup>(1)</sup> Those masterpieces included Handel's Messiah and Mendelssohn's Elijah. Today Mendelssohn remains Akpabot's favourite composer although his influence seldom appears in his own works. As well as being a chorister he also found time to play in bands, the most popular of which was the Chocolate Dandies, formed and led by Soji Lijadu. In 1949 when Akpabot left the choir, his voice having broken, he formed his own band, the Akpabots Players, T.A.P. as it was popularly called. In addition to leading a band, Akpabot was also organist at St. Saviours Church in Lagos. Referring to this dual nature of his musical activities he said:

"I would come back very late in the night from night clubs and steal into the Bishop's court where I lived (with Bishop Vining, then, of Lagos) and the following morning go to play for both the Holy Communion Service and the Sunday Mattins!"

In 1954 he came to London to the Royal College of Music to study organ and trumpet. His teachers included John Addison, Osborn Pisgow and Herbert Howells and he also met Thurston Dart and Gordon Jacob. He later left the Royal College for Trinity College. He returned to Nigeria in 1959 with an ARCM and LTCL and took a post as broadcaster with the N.B.C.

It was also in 1959 that Akpabot's compositional career began. Despite his wide exposure in England to European styles ranging from the

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(1) Expressed in a personal conversation with me - see Appendix, p.339.

pre-baroque to the twentieth century and despite his initial training at Christ Church - the citadel of the emerging tradition of Nigerian Church music - it was the Highlife idiom which dominated his first attempts at composition. His first work, Nigeriana, for orchestra (1959) was originally written as an exercise for his composition teacher, John Addison.<sup>(1)</sup> After minor revisions it was later renamed Overture for a Nigerian Ballet. Conceived along the tradition of a nineteenth century concert overture the work is characterised by literal and allusive quotations of Highlife tunes strung together in a rhapsodic manner.

In 1962 Akpabot left the N.B.C. for the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, to become one of the pioneering members of the academic staff of the music department. Nsukka proved a stimulating atmosphere in which to compose. The University, itself, established in the same year as Nigeria's independence, was generally regarded as a symbol of a modern independent Nigeria. It was seen as one of the most important foundations for fashioning an artistic tradition that would reflect the national aspirations of the country. Between 1962 and 1967 Akpabot wrote four works which clearly reflect the prevailing nationalist euphoria of that time. The works are Scenes from Nigeria, for orchestra (1962); Three Nigerian Dances, for string orchestra and percussion (1962); The Ofala, a tone poem for wind orchestra and five African instruments (1963) and Cynthia's Lament, tone poem for soloist, wind orchestra and six African instruments (1965). Both The Ofala and Cynthia's Lament were commissioned by the director of American Wind Symphony Orchestra, Robert Austin Boudreaw, who had been invited to Nigeria in 1962 by the Nigeria Arts Council. The Ofala and Cynthia's Lament were premiered in Pittsburgh in 1963 and 1965 respectively.

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(1) For a list of Akpabot's works see the Appendix, p. 335.

While the Scenes from Nigeria and the Three Nigerian Dances belong essentially to the same category as the Overture for a Nigerian Ballet, The Ofala and Cynthia's Lament reveal a greater emphasis on African (Ibibio) elements not only in the use of instruments but in the use of melodic and formal procedures.<sup>(1)</sup> These two works show a prevalence for Ibibio derived melodic patterns and formal procedures dictated largely by an extra-musical consideration. The Ofala, in 1972, won first prize in a competition for African composers organised by the African Centre of the University of California, Los Angeles; forty one African countries were represented. The prize winning work was a tone poem based on the annual "Yam Eating" of the Onitsha people of Anambra state, (see Chapter 8, p. 222 footnote). Its formal outline is suggested by the format of the festival which it tries to evoke.<sup>(1)</sup> Although Cynthia's Lament has a form that is not tied to an extra musical element it is also a tone poem. Its conception is described fully by the composer:

"Cynthia Avery was the 16 year old daughter of the White American Vice-Chairman of the American Wind Symphony Orchestra of Pittsburgh with whom I stayed during a visit in 1963 for the premiere of "Ofala". After the performance we went to the Conrad Hilton to have coffee with Mr. Boudreau. The rather silly waiters deliberately avoided serving Miss Avery and myself (we were seated together a short distance from the girl's parents and Mr. Boudreau, who were served). This so distressed Miss Avery that she stormed out of the cafe into the foyer, sobbing, 'I don't know what has become of my people!' I decided to write a short piece for her, and on my next commission two years later, I produced "Cynthia's Lament".<sup>(2)</sup>

An important feature of the work is that Cynthia Avery's lament is reinterpreted in African musico-dramatic terms. The harmonic-tonal framework of the work is, like Akpabot's previous works, still almost

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(1) See Chapter 8.

(2) Akpabot, S. "The Conflict between Foreign and Traditional Culture in Nigeria" Daily Times, Lagos, October 1, 1970, pp. iv-v.



entirely diatonic, and it is only in a later work, Nigerian in Conflict, for wind orchestra and eight Nigerian instruments (1973), which is a commentary on the Nigerian Civil War, that Akpabot began to use key changes and chromatic punctuations as shown in Chapter 8.

Akpabot is the one Nigerian composer who has written almost entirely for the orchestra. The reasons are not hard to see: his involvement in the Highlife music is reflected in his heavy reliance on wind and percussion; and during the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) he was in charge of the Biafran Army band. His choice of instrumentation is, however, also conditioned by the need to project the features of traditional African, especially Ibibio, music. His most favoured African instruments, as exemplified in the Nigeria in Conflict, consist of those which are typical of Ibibio music. They are the gong, woodblock, rattle, wooden drum and xylophone. In the same vein his favoured use of wind instruments is determined by the fact that they can be more readily used to provide melo-rhythmic fragments, similar to those played by the Uta Horn orchestra (an Ibibio orchestra consisting of horns made from elephants' tusks.<sup>(1)</sup> By combining these two categories of instruments (European wind and Ibibio percussion) in, for example, Ofala and Nigeria in Conflict, Akpabot hoped to achieve an orchestral effect in which "African instruments are treated on equal footing with Western instruments and not as exotic instruments which they are not".<sup>(2)</sup> In addition, by using melodic and harmonic elements inspired by traditional Nigerian and Highlife idioms and formal schemes akin to African procedures, Akpabot was courting popularity. According to him modern Nigerian composers should not engage themselves in writing works whose appreciation will be restricted to the educated elite: "it is for this reason that I often ignore European standard forms and

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(1) For a discussion of this and other features of Ibibio traditional music see Akpabot, S., Functional Music of the Ibibio People of Nigeria, Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1975.

(2) Expressed in a conversation with me, see Appendix, p. 339.

techniques as represented, for example, in sonata form in favour of formal techniques commonly employed in traditional African music."<sup>(1)</sup>

At the end of the civil war in 1970 Akpabot became a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ife, and the two works written there continued to reflect the nationalist element of the pre-war works. These were Two Nigerian Folk Tunes, for choir and piano, (1974) and JaJa of Opobo, a folk opera, sung and spoken in Efik, English and Ibo (1972). Akpabot's nationalist zeal has, however, been curtailed in his two most recent works: Te Deum Laudamus, Church Anthem, choir and organ, (1975) and Verba Christi, a Cantata for three soloists, chorus and orchestra commissioned by the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation for the World Black Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) which took place in Lagos in 1977. The two works brought back echoes of the Church, the foundation of his musical training. The Verba Christi is his largest work to date and (as we shall see in Chapter 7) is notable for its use of musical materials from diverse European styles ranging from the Victorian choral tradition to twentieth century atonality. Despite its strong European leaning, Akpabot's approach to the use of the tone row, motivic processes and melodic conception in Verba Christi still bear the influences of African music. Samuel Akpabot, who now teaches at the University of Ibadan, is currently working on Samuel, an Oratorio for chorus, soloists and orchestra. The adoption of the distinctly European format in his most recent compositions does not indicate a turning point in his compositional career; rather, it reflects the varied nature of his artistic temperament, itself a reflection of the diversity of musical resources at his disposal.

Contrasting with Akpabot's compositional preference for orchestral works is Okechukwu Ndubuisi's predilection for writing vocal works. As the most important and consistent composer of modern Igbo vocal Art music, his

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(1) Ibid.

works represent some of the most articulate forms of that tradition.

Okechukwa Ndubuisi was born on the 29th September 1939, in **Item**, Imo state, of Eastern Nigeria. At the age of six he went with his uncle, who was transferred as a teacher to Ora in Bendel state. It was in Ora, where he received his primary and secondary education, that he had his first formal contact with European music as a chorister in Ora Methodist Church. The organist and choirmaster, Mr. Odutola, from Abeokuta (in Western Nigeria) later gave Ndubuisi his first lessons on the piano and organ. In addition, Ndubuisi as a chorister had an early opportunity to develop his talent as a singer.

At the age of 17 after his secondary school education, he went to Enugu (in Eastern Nigeria) where he met a British Engineer-Musician who, impressed by his potential as a singer and pianist, gave him lessons in singing and piano free of charge.

Two important developments took place in his musical life at Enugu. Firstly, he played in Jazz bands. As a pianist in these bands he was introduced to the basic principles of Jazz harmony and improvisation. Secondly, in 1959, he met a Scottish Operatic Singer, Mrs. Grant Elliot, with whom, in that same year, he formed the Enugu Operatic Society. Before the end of 1959 this society was able to produce the popular musical The King and I. His involvement with this operatic company was significant in his musical career, for a year later, he came to London to study music at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Some of the courses he took at the Guildhall were in piano playing, singing, acting and composition. Ndubuisi recalls that one of his composition teachers, the late Professor Peter Wishart, was particularly "understanding enough to allow me to incorporate African elements in my composition exercises", a practice he has followed ever since.<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) See the Appendix, pp.336-337 for a list of Ndubuisi's compositions.

On his return to Nigeria in 1966, and after playing with Jazz bands in Enugu, he joined the staff of the Department of Music at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka where he has remained ever since. It was here that his compositional career began in earnest. His stay at Nsukka affords him the opportunity to meet students from different parts of the country with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds from whom he collects folk songs which are later used in his works. Thus, many of his works are arrangements, and they included O Se Va (Edo) for SATB; Mwa mgbogho Delu uli (Igbo) solo voice and piano; Ife di na oba (Igbo) solo voice and piano, Nyarinya (Hausa), soprano solo and piano and Ogun Salewa (Itsekiri) SATB.

Ndubuisi's compositions have reflected the diverse nature of his training and experience. A survey of his works shows that the same set of stylistic features recur.<sup>(1)</sup> His harmonic vocabulary often reflects influences from the Highlife, Jazz and Igbo traditional music with occasional and sporadic echoes of European folk inspired tradition of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One of these often dominates in a particular work. Thus in works such as O Se Va, Ozuiem Obodomu, SATB, and Mama G'abara Mu mba, for soprano solo and piano there is a strong Highlife favour while there is an undisguised Jazz orientation in works like The Blue nocturne, piano and War Dance, piano. On the other hand, the influence of early twentieth century English song composers, Vaughan Williams and Ivor Gurney for example, is strong in such works as Ife di na oba, Nwa mgbogho delu and Anwuli min Dze. Ndubuisi's most successful works (as we shall see in Chapters 9, 10 and 11) are those in which these diverse elements are integrated on an almost equal basis to provide a personal style. Such works are usually those not based on a folk song, that is, those that are entirely original.

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(1) See Chapters 9, 10 and 11 for a study of Ndubuisi's works.

They include Anoro Anokwuku, SATB (1973); Ajama-Kwara Ngwongwo, SATB (1979); Onina Manya Ogo, SATB (1972); Afufu Uwa, for voice, flute and piano (1975) and Nwa Aramonu, SATB (1973). These works were written at a later stage in his compositional career (as their dates show), reflecting a more mature approach to fusing African and European elements than in earlier works such as Ife di na oba and Anwu Ti mini Dze.

Apart from solo songs and part-songs, Ndubuisi has written two operas. These are Dr Feeles (1968) and The Vengeance of Lizards (1966). The first is a propaganda work for the Rebel Biafran Army in which Ndubuisi served during the Nigerian civil war. The score has since been destroyed by the composer at the end of the war. The Vengeance of Lizards, Ndubuisi's most popular work, is, on the other hand, based on an Igbo myth in which traditional beliefs in secret societies, reincarnation and ancestral spirits are explored. As will be shown in Chapter 11 the work, along with Bankole's Festac Cantata, exemplifies the use of traditional Nigerian musico-dramatic elements within an imported European form.

Like the other composers mentioned in this chapter, Ndubuisi believes that the projection of the Nigerian cultural heritage should be the major pre-occupation of any Nigerian composer. Since the socio-cultural environment of a composer is, however, inseparable from his artistic inclination, such a projection, even when not consciously done, will often manifest itself in his works.

Certain important points have emerged in this chapter. These include the evidence of nationalism as a strong motivation for composition, the combination of creative engagements and research activities in traditional music by the composers, and the existence of a variety of approaches at realising nationalist objectives in compositions ranging

from organ works, piano works, orchestral works (including those in which traditional instruments are employed), solo songs, part songs, orally conceived works and large choral works. In order to elucidate these and other points highlighted in the above discussion the chapters on analysis which follow are divided into six sections. In all six chapters, emphasis is placed on illustrating, through analysis, the major compositional issues raised in this chapter with regards to the works of each composer. As we shall see later, although the main stylistic features of African music are almost quantifiable, the way and manner in which they have been reflected in modern Nigerian Art music differs not only from the works of one composer to another but also from one work to another even by the same composer.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE USE OF SYNCRETIC THEMATIC MATERIALS : THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FELA SOWANDE

Sowande's organ and 'Afro-American' choral works occupy an important historical place within the tradition of modern Nigerian music. As the most important and earliest Nigerian composer of Art music in the European classical idiom, his organ works (written in the 1940s and early 1950s) and his choral works (written in the late 1950s)<sup>(1)</sup> were the earliest notable examples of such Art music. They therefore laid the foundations for some of the stylistic directions adopted by the emerging generation of Nigerian nationalist composers. While the organ works are based on Yoruba-Anglican church melodies the choral works make use of Afro-American gospel tunes.

Viewed within the historical developments of music in Nigeria the works represent a stage which follows that of the experiments of pioneering composers of indigenous church music. It should be remembered that Fela Sowande's father, Emmanuel Sowande, was one of the most notable figures of those pioneering works.<sup>(2)</sup> In addition, placed within the history of Fela Sowande's compositional career, these works provide an insight into the patterns of development that characterise his nationalistic aspirations. This development culminated, at the turn of the fifties, in the writing of his most mature and important work - the Nigeria Folk Symphony.

Mention must be made here of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912) who was a significant source of inspiration for Sowande. Like his nineteenth century counterparts, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's works provided the most relevant models for Sowande and indeed other Nigerian composers. In his Twenty Four Negro melodies Op. 59 (1904), for example, African

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(1) See Appendix for a list of these works.

(2) See Chapter 2.

folk tunes, including a Yoruba one, are used as thematic ideas. As the first and most popular Black composer of Yoruba-Saro descent his works were very popular among the younger generation of African composers,<sup>(1)</sup> including Sowande. The beauty of African melodies and their suitability as thematic material in extended compositions is a feature central to Coleridge-Taylor's works. In the forward to his Op. 59 he states that:

"the negro melodies in this volume are not merely arranged - on the contrary they have been amplified, harmonised and altered... The plan adopted has been almost without exception that of the Tema con variazioni. The actual melody has in every case been inserted at the head of each piece as a motto. The music which follows is nothing more or less than a series of variations built on the said motto. Therefore my share in the matter can be clearly traced and must not be confounded with any idea of improving the original material... The music of Africa ... has all the elements of the European folk song and it is remarkable that no alterations have had to be made before treating the melodies. This is even so with the example from West Africa (a song of Yoruba origin, Oloba) - a highly original number."

This lengthy quotation emphasises a fundamental point: that African songs often possess identical features with those of European; and therefore their treatment within a European harmonic - formal context does not always necessarily imply a suppression of their structural features.

It is important to note that the use of Nigerian syncretic tunes and the rather paradoxical treatment of such tunes within often complex European nineteenth century textures, is a common feature of Sowande's compositional style. In addition he also often makes use of the Tema con variazioni to present their melodies (as in Oyigiyigi and Akinla) and like those works of Coleridge-Taylor in which African melodies are used, Sowande's are not conceived as mere arrangements but as original compositions.

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(1) This point was confirmed by Dr. Akpabot in a personal discussion with the writer in 1985.



While Coleridge-Taylor's works provided notable stylistic precedents for him, Sowande's works often present more articulate means of incorporating African elements. In this regard four features are of immediate importance and are central to an examination of examples of his organ and choral works. These are:

- i) the integration between African inspired modal harmonies and European functional harmony;
- ii) the interaction between African formal procedures and European formal techniques;
- iii) the use of traditional African rhythmic patterns and procedures; and
- iv) the evocation of traditional vocal techniques.

In 1944 Sowande gave a lecture on African music attended by members of the African music society.<sup>(1)</sup> During the lecture, which took place at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, "he played records of a number of African themes transcribed by himself for voices, organ and orchestra, showing how the same traditional melody might be treated so as to give either a Western or an African atmosphere".<sup>(2)</sup> The names of the works played to illustrate these points are not given in the report on that lecture. It is, however, not surprising to note that his organ and choral works have reflected these two basic compositional procedures. The use of an African melody within a European derived formal and harmonic context is, for example, illustrated in Oyigiyigi and Kyrie, two of his most popular organ works. The largely European context of the two works is evident in Sowande's approach to form, motivic process and harmonic-tonal language and it is under these broad headings that the works will be examined. The predominantly European conception of these works is

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(1) Sowande, Fela. "African Music" Africa, Vol. XIV, 1944, pp.340-342.

(2) Ibid, p.342.

noticeable in the combination of the use of contrived motivic process, the use of European tripartite forms and the reliance on harmony and tonality to generate tension.

The theme on which Oyigiyigi is based is a Yoruba-Anglican melody (Ex. 1). The work employs the "theme and variation" format although, as Fig. I shows, it is guided by a background tripartite conception. Thus both its introduction and the first statement of the theme constitute the first section, while variations 2-8 function as a middle developmental section, with variations 9 and 10 as the reprise.

The introduction anticipates the main theme motivically in bars 1-4 (see Ex. 2) and later in bars 27-29. In addition its harmonic procedures foreshadow the general harmonic-tonal features of the main body of the work through the juxtaposition of chords which have semitonal root relationships - a romantic tendency which recalls similar procedures in Max Reger - and the use of unstable compound chordal elements. These two characteristic features can be observed in Ex. 3.

A prominent feature of the middle section is the employment of fugal passages to develop the main theme (see Fig. 1). Apart from this, four main factors also underline the structural function of variations 2-8 as a development section:

- i) Throughout this long section, Ex. 1 is not often presented fully; only fragments and phrases derived from it appear most of the time (see variations 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8).
- ii) Each of the endings of variations 2-8 is not closed tonally - one variation leads on to a subsequent one. For example, the closing bars (128-131) of variation II, Ex. 4, do not end on a tonic chord of F. Instead there is a gradual, almost unnoticed, progression

FIG. 1 : OYIGIYIGI: OUTLINE OF FORM

Main Sections	Variations	Bars	Texture	Main Tonal Areas	Structural Function
Exposition ↓	Intro- duction	1-49	Pre- dominantly homophonic	Generally unstable → C	Introduction : motivic and harmonic anticipation of main body
	Theme	50-67	"	C pentatonic)	Exposition of main melody
	1	{ 68-90	"	A major	
		{ 91-109	Homophonic	Unstable	Prepares the F of bars 110 ff
Development ↓	2	110-131	Fugal	F (unstable)	Motivic development
	3	132-153	Homophonic	A (unstable)	Link
	4	154-171	"	F (unstable) C pedal	
	5	172-205	"	Shifting: F, A flat, D, C, D flat, C, D	
	6	206-226	"	D <sup>b</sup> (unstable)	
	7	227-280	Fugal	E <sup>b</sup> (unstable)	Struct- ural climax of piece
	8	(265-279)		Tritone (chromatic)	
		281-293	Homophonic	Unstable→F	Link to Reprise
Reprise ↓	9	294-301	Homophonic	B <sup>b</sup> - C	Main Melody reappears in full
	10	302-309	"	C	
	Coda	310-313	"	C	

to the A major of variation III. Likewise the F major of variation V is extensively prepared in the final bars (150-153), Ex. 5, of variation IV.

- iii) The middle section is characterised by contrasting textures - contrapuntal (often fugal) and homophonic.
- iv) As Fig. I shows, it is marked by a generally restless tonal character.

It is in bars 227-264 that the most extensive fugal passage of the piece is featured. After the fugal exposition (bars 227-244) the fugal subject is abandoned, apart from its motivic echoes, while the passage (in bars 244-264) oscillates between the keys of C (major and minor versions) and the key of G major - tonal areas which are a third below and above the E flat major of the fugue. In bar 265 these two subsidiary tonal areas are abandoned for loud tritone chords (bars 265 ff) which move to a local peak in bar 270 and are relieved by a chromatic sequence (bars 271-279). This nine-bar chromatic passage, Ex. 6, constitutes the structural climax of the piece; for what happens immediately after (bars 280-293) is a transition to the reprise (variation IX) where the main theme appears within a very diatonic and homophonic texture.

Two important harmonic procedures employed in the work are:

- i) extensive chromatic embellishment of passages which are tonally directed. The most notable instance of this is the introduction whose C tonality is overshadowed from bar 4 until bar 43 when it is confirmed;
- ii) the use of harmonic progressions which underline continuously shifting tonal areas as in variation V, bars 172-205.

The whole large-scale structural use of these procedures can be observed in Fig. 1.

A general tonal character of the work is its overall movement from an initially restless tonal character to the emphatic and diatonic B flat and C major of the reprise (see Fig. 1). Although tonal areas are featured in the first two sections of the work, they often lack convincing corroboration. For example, the A major of variation III is abandoned after barely 12 bars; it is relieved by C major in bar 144. Even in its few bars of existence (132-143) the A major is given an ambivalent character because of the consistent appearance of the minor 7th. In variation IV, apart from a reference through a dominant pedal, the F major of the section is relegated to the background through unstable chords which progress in semitones.

The mere use of a national melody is not enough to give a work a national identity. Although Oyigiyigi is based on a Yoruba pentatonic melody it has no substantial Nigerian character since the structural context within which the melody is used bears a very strong European influence, as shown above. However, although the Oyigiyigi does not possess any significant African character the pentatonic Yoruba melody (Ex. 1) is used in the piece with considerable structural significance. In the work, Sowande exploits a particular African feature of the melody to the advantage of the two most important European features of the work: its contrived motivic process and its exploratory harmonic-tonal framework. The melody is divisible into four phrases: a, a<sup>1</sup>, b, a<sup>1</sup> (Ex. 1). The relationship between a and a<sup>1</sup> exists only in contour similarity and not in terms of intervallic correspondence. This relationship is determined by linguistic factors: both phrases a and a<sup>1</sup> are based on the same text and, by virtue of the rules of linguo-melodic relationship in Yoruba music, are bound to employ the same contour in their

melodies. This principle of "inexact tonal duplication" constitutes the generative motivic process on which the structure of the work often relies and it is a feature which goes hand in hand with its often unstable tonal character. We shall cite two instances to illustrate this. The non-diatonic sevenths of bars 61-66 (Ex. 7) rely on inexact sequential statements of motif "a" of Ex. 1. Likewise the chromatic character of variation IV relies on the use of the same procedure as Ex. 8, bars 162-164 illustrates.

Another influence of a germinal element of Ex. 1 on the harmonic conception of the work occurs in cadential procedures. As discussed in Chapter 4, harmonic procedures which emphasise the use of perfect cadences are generally not suitable in the treatment of Yoruba pentatonic melodies. This is because of the absence in a pentatonic scale of a semitonal leading note. In many instances in the work, Sowande avoids a strong use of the perfect cadence even when, as in bars 217-218, (Ex. 9) it is harmonically feasible. It is also instructive to see a correspondence between this and the rarity of dominant-tonic relationships within the general tonal conception of the piece (see Fig. 1). The emphasis given to the plagal cadence rather than the perfect in the final bars (302-313) represents the most direct reference to the Yoruba-Anglican heritage of the thematic idea of the work; it symbolises the marginal role of tonic - dominant progression in the harmonic - tonal conception of the work.

From a stylistic point of view the Kyrie constitutes a development of some of the features of Oyigiyigi. As we have seen, the "theme and variation" format of Oyigiyigi has a background tripartite basis, with most of the so called variations functioning as different stages within the developmental process of the middle section. The general form of the work consequently has less of the character of familiar "theme and variation" format than a tripartite outline. In Kyrie, Sowande uses

another Yoruba pentatonic melody, but here abandons the quasi - 'theme and variation' of Oyigiyigi for a less disguised tripartite outline (Fig. 2).

Its introduction, compared with that of Oyigiyigi, assumes a more organic arrangement. Both the main theme, Ex. 10, (bars 10-15) and other motivic ideas (the most prominent of which is Ex. 11) which appear in bars 1-9 and 16-33 are in a ternary form. Bars 1-33 function as an "exposition" in which two main ideas are presented (see Fig. 2).

Both of these two main ideas undergo extensive development in the long middle section (bars 34-177) which is realised in two broad divisions (bars 34-118 and 119-177). Each of the divisions ends on a chord of A major. Like Oyigiyigi it is in the second section of the development that the forward momentum of the piece is increased. Compared with the first which divides into three parts (see Fig. 2), the second section of the development is outlined in a continuous stream of activity more intense than the first. Four features typify the second section of the development:

- 1) the continuous evasion of strong tonal cadences;
- 2) the consistency of the contrapuntal texture;
- 3) the use of an extensive fugue as a medium of a more elaborate motivic process; and
- 4) the use of notes of shorter durational values as a basis of melodic movement.

All these points are highlighted in Fig. 2.

In the reprise of bars 178-219 the main theme appears in two versions - its original form (Ex. 10a) and its extended versions (Ex. 10b) (which appears in bars 182-219). While bars 182 to the end function as a

FIG. 2 : KYRIE: OUTLINE OF FORM

Sections	Bars	Main Tonal Areas	Functions
"Exposition" Bars 1-33	1-9(Motif: Ex.11)  10-15(Theme: Ex.10)  16-33 (Ex.11)	F : generally unstable - presents A major as a referential chordal area in bars 9 and 29-33.	Exposition of two important ideas - Exx. 10 and 11.
Development (Bars 34-177)	{ 34-69 { 70-100 a { 101-118 { { 119-177 b {	B <sup>b</sup> (minor) - unstable B <sup>b</sup> (minor) - unstable B <sup>b</sup> (major) - unstable ends on referential A major F - unstable: ends on referential A major	Developmental: Fugal Developmental: Passacaglia Developmental: Homophonic Developmental: Fugal
Reprise and Coda (Bars 178-219)	178-181  182-219	F  F	Reprise : Homophonic  Coda : Homophonic



coda, it constitutes a symbolic re-enactment of the origin of the main thematic element of the piece (that is Ex. 10a and its extended version Ex. 10b). Both are chants usually rendered in Yoruba-Anglican churches during the Holy Communion Service. Ex. 10a is chanted after each of the first nine commandments while Ex. 10b is chanted only after the last commandment. The differences between the two versions arise from the differences in their texts. In his study of this work, Hildreth analysed the form of the Kyrie as an outline of ten different sections analogous to each of the ten commandments, thus suggesting that the work has a kind of programme.<sup>(1)</sup> While it is true that its primary thematic material are chanted during the reciting of the ten commandments, the work makes no direct programmatic reinterpretation of the liturgical situation. The use of Ex. 10b as closing material is therefore more appropriately seen as a musical exploitation of its liturgical Coda-like function.

Like Oyigiyigi, the Kyrie presents a highly contrived motivic process. The opening bars initiate this feature where it can be observed that the subsidiary opening phrase, Ex. 11, is actually derived from the main theme, Ex. 10. One example will serve to illustrate Sowande's detailed attention to motivic development, even within the introduction. In bars 25-32, motif X (Ex. 11), (derived from Ex. 10) is used on different structural levels. As can be observed in Ex. 12 the top melodic line of bars 25-32 constitutes an extensive prolongation of motif x - which consists of a semitonal descent and a rise of a major third. Thus the melodic strand, starting on B flat in bar 25 outlines a zig-zag descent to A in bar 27. In bar 27 the note A is emphasised as being melodically important through its octave displacement and through its dynamic and agogic accent. There is a melodic descent from this A to D (in bar 28) from which there is a leap through B natural (bar 28) to C

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(1) Hildreth, A. : Keyboard Works of selected Black Composers.  
Ph.D. dissertation, North-Western University, 1977, p.22.

sharp in bar 29. Like the note A of bars 27 and 28, C sharp is given emphasis through its loud dynamics and long duration. The large scale movement of B flat - A - C sharp of bars 25-32 just described above, is also echoed on another level. It is plausible to view the role of the rallentando of bar 27 as a means of slowing down the tempo to draw attention to the local, microscopic, echoing of the B flat - A - C sharp motif in the second half of the second beat of bar 27. Such detailed attention to motivic development is a constant feature of the work. While the first section of the development is permeated with motif X and its variants the second (bars 119-177) is marked by a constant use of variants of Ex. 10a.

The harmonic features of the Kyrie recall the character of Oyigiyigi in its rich chromatic vocabulary. Its tonal character, however, deserves some comment. In the introduction an harmonic area of A major functions as a temporary tonal focus. Between bars 1 and 9 it is stated four times with a considerable degree of emphasis. From a wider structural point of view, however, and considering what happens later in the piece, this A major which also constantly recurs at major cadential points (e.g. bars 31-33, 117-118, 176-177) has an anticipatory character towards a D tonal area.

Although the chaconne-like ground bass (A, G, F) which permeates the opening bars creates a D minor impression, that key is not properly established: the A major chord (the V of D minor) in bars 29-33 only moves to an interrupted cadence note of B<sup>b</sup> in bar 34. Even when a similar A major, ending in bars 117 and 118, is relieved by a D minor fugue (bars 119 ff) there is still a lack of a strong feeling of a perfect cadence as can be observed in bars 117-119.

It is not until the loud D minor chords of bar 178 that the

dominant function of the cadential A major chords is fully, though briefly, confirmed. To view the D minor chord of bar 178 as a culminating resolution of the preceding long term A major suspense is plausible since that bar represents the beginning of the reprise. The continuous reference, through a dominant chord, to the key of D minor in the work rather than a C major (V of F) again highlights the non-importance of the dominant in the tonal conception of the work (see Fig. 2).

Despite its predominantly European conception there are attempts at reflecting the Nigerian character of the theme on which it is based. These include the use of harmonic parallelisms as in bars 183-205 - a feature reminiscent of the harmonic treatment of the theme during congregational singing, and the use of an open chord in the final bars which also recalls the open fifth chords common in Yoruba vocal music. As the analysis above shows, Sowande's musical language in these two works belongs essentially to the nineteenth century European tradition, especially in its use of extensive chromaticism to enrich a traditionally (European) conceived tonal language and the use of fairly extensive motivic processes.

A look at another work, Gloria, shows a substantially different approach. Although Gloria is also based on a Yoruba pentatonic melody, Ogo in fun O Oluwa (Glory be to thee, O God), Ex. 13; and although the work retains the harmonic language as well as the fugal procedures of both the Oyigiyigi and Kyrie, four main features differentiate it from those two works:

- i) In its different sections the pentatonic (modal) character of the melody is given considerable prominence.
- ii) The work employs a motivic process characterised by a gradual unfolding of the main theme. Thus the main theme, Ex. 13, is not stated fully until towards the end of the piece in bar 313.

Its total structure is therefore defined by a development not away from the theme but towards it.<sup>(1)</sup>

- iii) Throughout the piece a pentatonic ostinato passage recurs. As a rondo-type passage it alternates with episodes in which segments of the theme are successively presented (Fig. 3).
- iv) The absence of a very explorative harmonic-tonal progression to achieve tension (as can be observed in Fig. 3).

We shall briefly examine each of these features since they represent Sowande's attempt at replacing the structural procedures of both the Kyrie and Oyigiyigi with a constructive method which incorporates more Nigerian-derived elements.

The pentatonic ostinatos which pervade the whole work are introduced in the opening bars which divide into two paragraphs. The first, bars 1-8, where the ostinato materials are presented in a quasi-fugal manner (Ex. 14), ends on an A major chord recalling a similar focus on the mediant major in the opening bars of Kyrie. The second, bars 8-16, is a transposition of the first. It ends on an enharmonic version of a traditional European eighteenth/nineteenth century chord (augmented 6th French type (Ex. 15)) which, rather than moving as is customary back to C or on to D flat, is used as an approach to the F sharp major of bars 17-22.

In the first episode (bars 17-29) a segment of the main theme, phrase x, Ex. 13, appears in conjunction with chromatic material Ex. 16: while phrase x appears in bars 17-22, Ex. 16, derived from motif y, also of the main theme, appears in bars 22-28.

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(1) This particular structural outline is not unrelated to traditional Yoruba formal procedure in which an instrumental performance starts with a prelude. This prelude is known as IJUBA - homage paying to ancestral spirits. Thus a musical performance for the worship of Sango - the god of thunder - will start by an IJUBA to Sango before proceeding to the main body of performance in which the main melodic-textual ingredients of the piece are rendered.

FIG. 3 : GLORIA: OUTLINE OF FORM

Sections		Bars	Main Tonal Areas	Motivic and Thematic Elements
1st episode	A	1-16)	1-8 8-16 F; A →	Pentatonic ostinato: (Ex. 14)
	B	17-29) x	F sharp → F (descending chromatic sequence in bars 23-29)	Motives x and y of main theme (Ex.13)
	A	29-37)	F	Ex. 14
2nd episode	C	36-96	36-62 - F  63-96 - F minor	Phrases x and y of main theme (Ex.13) Ex. 18.
	A	97-112)	F; A →	Ex. 14.
1st episode	B	113-125) x <sup>1</sup>	F sharp → F (descending chromatic sequence : bars 119-125)	Motives x and y of Ex. 13.
	A	125-133)	F	Ex. 14.
3rd episode	D	134-144	F	Phrases x and y (Ex. 13)
4th episode	A	144-152	F	Ex. 14.
	E	153-267	F (but modulating esp. bars 231-239)	Fugal theme based on phrase z of main theme (Ex. 13)
Main theme	F	268-300	F	Main theme fully presented for the first time.
	A	300-313	F	Ex. 14.

The second episode (bars 36-96) divides into two sections, the first of which (bars 36-62) is an elaboration of the first episode. Within the section (that is bars 37-62) there is also a clear reference to the main theme. For example, the quasi-passacaglia, modally inflected material (Ex. 17) is a development of both phrases x and y of the main theme. The upper melody which is also echoed in other layers of the texture is phrase x while the ostinato pattern in the pedals anticipate the main theme both in its modal character and the prominent use of motif y. The second section of this episode (that is bars 63-96) deviates from the modal - heterophonic character of the first (bars 37-62) to a tonal passage in F minor, where contrasting material is introduced (Ex. 18).

The third episode of bars 134-144 is a very brief one but it makes a yet clearer reference to the main theme. Here phrases x and y of the main theme are also presented. Unlike the first episode, however, where phrase y is chromatically embellished and unlike the second where it is presented in a slightly varied form, phrase y is, in the third episode, presented in its original form, that is, in the way in which it appears in the main theme. The alternations between ostinato-modal passages such as bar 1-16 and tonal passages such as bars 63-96 continue throughout the work. From a harmonic-tonal point of view there is a complementary relationship between these two types of passages since passages in which there are tonally directed harmonies compensate for the static nature of ostinato-modal sections.

The most important of the tonal passages is the fugal section of bars 153-267. Like tonal passages in Oyigiyigi and Kyrie they extend the range of activities not only in their wide ranging harmonic progressions but also their extensive motivic development. It is after this extensive passage (bars 153-267) that the main theme appears fully for the first

time, within a strong and chromatically embellished texture of bars 270-300. As in bars 45-47 the theme is heterophonically echoed in different layers of texture by phrases x and y, both of which appear briefly in the pedals (bars 285-294). After a brief digression to the pentatonic ostinato once more in bars 300-304 the central tonality of F is restored emphatically through a b VI  $\frac{6}{4}$  and b VI  $\frac{6}{3}$  4 .

The use of (heterophonic) contrapuntal modal passages as a means of preserving the African character of a thematic idea is more pervading in other organ works such as K'a mura and Prayer.

The total structure of Prayer, a work noted for its emotive and meditative outlook, is characterised by extensive heterophonic modal passages and a solemn yet serene mood. In addition, the complex fugal procedures of the previous three works are abandoned. The overall form of the work has a fantasia-like character formed by an unexplorative tonal progression. While the modal melodies of Oyigiyigi, Kyrie, and to a certain extent, Gloria, are generally embedded within European conceived textures, in Prayer they are often accompanied either by pedal points, ostinato-chordal harmonies or woven into a contrapuntal modal texture - musical features which are Yoruba inspired. Compared with Gloria, the pervading use of these features constitutes an even greater attempt at giving a work a strong African character.

The first 24 bars function as an exposition in which the main theme is introduced. This is a digression from the three previous works where thematic elements are preceded either by an introduction (Kyrie and Oyigiyigi) or by an extensive motivic process (Gloria). The binary character of this introduction, bars 1-11 and 14-24 (linked together by a short imitative link) is suggested by the structure of the theme which as shown in Ex. 19, is in two sections. In its original setting (as a

Yoruba-Anglican church hymn) an organ interlude separated the two sections; in a similar way the bridge passage (bars 11-14) divides bars 1-10 from 15-24.

The first of the heterophonic contrapuntal modal passages of the work appears in bars 25 ff where there is a predominantly pentatonic passage. The whole of this section (bars 25-52) is modally conceived not only because the semitonal leading note vital to a diatonic-tonal organisation is often absent, but also because harmonic procedures are generally heterophonic rather than being vertically conceived as bars 31-32 illustrate (Ex. 20). When vertically conceived, harmonic progressions in the work often lack well defined tonal directions as in bars 53-56, 69-72 (Ex. 21a and b). In these examples chords progress in cycles of ostinato. This is in reaction to the way the main theme (which they accompany) is often developed. As illustrated in Ex. 21, the main theme is often broken into fragments which are then stated as ostinato. As a result of its modal, heterophonic procedures the total tonal scheme of the work lacks the dynamism of Kyrie and Oyigiyigi. The background tonality, E<sup>b</sup>, established in the introduction, is continuously overshadowed until the last bars (87-108). The long, extensive middle section (bars 25-84) overshadows this background key not usually through conventional European modulatory procedures (as in Oyigiyigi and Kyrie) but often through its pervadingly heterophonic modal procedures.

This work shows a greater reflection of elements which are characteristic of Yoruba music. But in doing so there arise important implications for its overall structure: its less explorative tonal framework is not unrelated to the pervading use of modal ostinato and heterophonic procedures. In addition, the piece has a generally free, rhapsodic form (a feature which can only evoke an improvisatory idiom) as well as a relatively short length (compared with Kyrie and Oyigiyigi) a feature which is also



related to its unexplorative key scheme.

An examination of Sowande's Afro-American choral works shows that many of the stylistic features of the organ pieces were carried over into them. However, while European elements such as harmony and form tend to overshadow the African elements in the organ works - Kyrie for instance - and despite a greater attempt at incorporating African elements in a work like Prayer, it is in the vocal works that we have the most direct use of African derived elements. Their immediate African appeal derives from the fact that they use such features as the call and response pattern, heterophonic procedures and highly stratified textures, the principle of continuous variation, the prevalence of ostinati materials and the evocation of the principle of collective improvisation, usually through the use of independent, embellishing phrases. In order to look at the use of these and other elements, examples of these works will be examined under two main headings. These are a) formal characteristics and texture, and b) harmonic procedures.

a) Formal characteristics and texture

The formal outline of Sit down servant (T.T.B.B. with solo tenor: a cappella) is characterised by a process of continuous variation in which the main melody, Ex. 22, undergoes various treatments. A prominent technique employed in the development of this melody is the use of the call and response pattern organised between a solo tenor and the choir. This format is illustrated in the opening bars where, following the establishment of the B minor tonality of the piece (bars 1-3), the solo tenor and the choir engage in two successive overlapping patterns of call and response (Ex. 23).

A notable feature of the piece is the tendency for it to be framed

by a progressively polarised texture. For example, in bars 19 ff, the texture of the piece develops into a more contrapuntal setting. While the tenor solo continues to state Ex. 22 in different variations, the remaining parts provide embellishing fragmentary phrases differentiated rhythmically, melodically and in phrase lengths and in a manner which evokes an improvisatory idiom (Ex. 24). Notable in Ex. 24 are the occurrences of ostinato phrases especially those provided by the tenors and the baritones. The use of ostinati is developed further in bars 26-34 where the tenors relieve the tenor solo of Ex. 22 leaving the baritones and the basses to provide a recurring idea set to a nonsensical phrase (Ex. 25). In bars 35 ff another nonsensical text introduces two motivic fragments (see a and b of Ex. 26). Each of these two fragments also functions heterophonically as embellishing punctuations to the main melody in the tenor solo part. The reappearance of the call - response pattern of the opening bars, (43-65), and a corresponding change from the highly stratified texture of bars 15-43 to a predominantly homophonic one, establishes the ternary structure of the piece.

Similar textural and formal features are also featured in Couldn't hear Nobody Pray. The original pentatonic melody on which the work is based is introduced by a soprano solo in bars 1-8, later joined by the tenors and basses which provide a descending chromatic line as accompaniment. While the opening section of the piece is characterised by a predominantly homophonic texture - that of the middle section, bars 16-31, is generally more stratified, especially in bars 25-27 (Ex. 27) where the overall texture is made up of as many as seven independent parts. The multilayered texture of this passage has a harmonic-tonal significance since it results in obliterating the background F major tonality which in bars 1-15 remained prominent. Thus while the key is still perceptible (in bars 25-27) the preponderance of decorative pitches in independent

lines, as well as the degree of non-congruency between phrase organisations in each part, results in the key being considerably weakened. The remainder of the piece, bars 32-52, continues with a predominantly homophonic texture, except for occasional punctuating and embellishing phrases in such bars as 33-35. Thus the defining criterion for the ternary structure of the piece relies, to a certain extent, on the organisation of texture. Although there is a brief digression to the tonal area of D flat in bars 32-39 it is through the increased stratification featured in the middle section that a sense of progression is induced.

One of the most elaborate uses of the formal and textural procedures stated above occurs in Wheel oh wheel (SATB) a piece which employs a fairly extensive ternary structure. The main tune (Ex. 28) is heard in bars 1-8, introduced within a fairly dense diatonic harmonic passage. The whole of the first section (bars 1-48) make regular use of call and response repetition of Ex. 28 with no major tonal change. The section ends on a dominant chord (with the 3rd missing) which slides easily to V7 in C (bar 49 ff) which never resolves. The organisation pattern of the second section, bars 49-82, abandons the call-response patterns of the first for a heterophonic procedure in which the altos, tenors and basses reiterate a textual-melodic pattern (Ex. 29) canonically as an accompaniment to the main tune which appears in the soprano part.

The second segment of the middle section (bars 57-82) is slower, abandons the earlier ostinato and has a more fragmentary character. In its initial paragraph bars 57-64, Ex. 28 is accompanied by hummed, embellishing chordal patterns; while from bar 65 to the end the choral writing is predominantly homophonic in texture. In bars 67-82 the main theme Ex. 28 is heard antiphonally with a considerable use of chromaticism. The last section of the work, bars 83-115, consists of a repetition of the thematic-textual patterns of the opening bars as well as a reference to

the ostinato patterns of bars 49-56 (Ex. 29).

One final example which presents yet another illustration of the use of African inspired formal elements is Sometimes I feel like a motherless child, a piece which is striking for its emotional depth. Its expressive quality which is reflected in the text (see Ex. 30) is enhanced through the use of a variety of dynamic markings, the use of rubato, a preponderance of harmonic movements in parallel 3rds, imitative procedures (not delineated through modulations) and a frequent, random division and merging of parts.

The preludial call technique is employed in the introduction of bars 1-8 where Ex. 31 establishes the modal character of the piece. The appearance of the main tune (Ex. 32) in bars 9-20 is characterised by two main features:

- i) its segments are stated antiphonally between different parts, and
- ii) between and overlapping these antiphonal presentations are various embellishing phrases derived from the main theme itself.

These textural procedures are illustrated in Ex. 33 of bars 9-12. One significant thing about these embellishing phrases is that they often momentarily provide harmonic interest (especially through their chromatic notes) without necessarily affecting the background key of the piece as Ex. 35, bars 14-17, illustrates.

Fluctuations of tempo through rubato as well as metric changes which pervade the piece are notational symbols which evoke an extemporised delivery style. They also highlight the spiritual, almost ecstatic, element of the music. The opening paragraphs, bars 1-8, establish these two features which are also well illustrated in bars 17-28. Here a fragmentary descant-like line provided (in tempo rubato) by the contralto

solo and characterised by an angular melodic pattern is accompanied by lines (provided by SATB), which end on long-sustained hummed lines. The whole passage which is typified by fluctuations in dynamics, metre, rate of execution, ends on a very soft dynamic level in bars 27-28, a musical painting of the text "I feel like am almos' gone".

In bars 29-38 there is a shift to the subdominant tonal levels (Ex. 34). In addition, the antiphonal character of bars 9-14 occurs on another level between the male voices: the tenor solo now relieves the contralto solo in the statement of the main melody while the tenors and the basses provide a hummed background.

As in many of the choral works the formal process of "Sometimes I feel like a motherless child" does not consist of any substantial motivic development. On the other hand the main melody which recurs (in an unchanging form) in all sections of the piece is continually treated to new textures. As a result the vague ternary outline of the piece relies partly on the change to a subdominant tonal level in bars 29-38 but more importantly on the return of the parallel harmonies and the overlapping antiphony (bars 9-15) in the last bars.

b) Harmonic procedures

The harmonic character of the choral works generally reveals strong interaction between African and European procedures. This is reflected in:

- i) the use of European functional harmony heavily infused with African derived modal elements;
- ii) the use of parallel harmonies;
- iii) the use of strophic harmonic progressions which do not rely upon large scale harmonic relationships for their continuity - a

feature generally found in syncretic African traditions such as Highlife and Nigerian church music<sup>(1)</sup>;

- iv) the preponderance of chromatic alterations to evoke the "blurred texture" of African music;
- v) the primacy of the subdominant rather than the dominant as the secondary tonal level: unlike the dominant, the subdominant is more amenable to harmonic progressions within an African modal, especially the pentatonic, scale; and
- vi) the sporadic division of parts especially at cadential points as often found in Nigerian music.

These features will be examined in examples of the choral works.

The alternations between major and minor 7ths in Sometimes I feel like a motherless child highlights the use of harmonic procedures which oscillate between pentatonic and diatonic tonal orientations. This can be observed by comparing two important melodic ingredients, Ex. 31 and Ex. 32. The continuous alternations between D and D sharp (as these examples illustrate) is only one instance of the frequent use of chromatic alterations in the piece. Others include the alternations between C and C sharp, B and B flat, F and F sharp in bars 15-17 (Ex. 35). While these modal mixtures help to provide harmonic-tonal interest they also articulate the emotive quality of the piece. The semitonal descents of bars 15-17 (Ex. 35) are particularly telling in their effect. This emotive quality is enhanced through the use of an inconsistent rhythmic and metric motion, decreasing dynamic levels and fragmentary phrasing.

In Goin' to set down there is a pervading tension which results from the use of chromatic alterations, especially the juxtapositions of the

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(1) See Chapter 3.

tonic D and its raised version D sharp as well as the major and minor third. While as Ex. 36 (bars 9-14) shows they serve as mere decorative chromatic pitches in the opening section, they exert considerable pressure on the background key of D minor as the piece progresses. The growing influence of decorative pitches can be heard in bars 22-29 (Ex. 37). The progressive amplification of the effect of decorative pitches is used on a larger scale in the final movement of Sowande's Symphony.<sup>(1)</sup>

The importance of the use of chromatic alterations is very prominently highlighted in the very last bars of Goin' to set down. Thus in bars 55-59 a bII chord which re-echoes the prominence of the raised tonic in the work functions effectively as a transition between a secondary dominant chord to the final tierce de picardie. These three cadential chords (Ex. 38), constitute a final enhancement of the importance of chromatic alterations in the piece. As in Sometimes I feel like a motherless child the use of chromatic alterations in the piece serve as an important means of achieving dramatic effects. The final bars (Ex. 38) are particularly striking, where there is a correlation between the decreasing dynamic level and the descending semitones.

The final example, Nobody knows de trouble I see, presents one of the most successful uses of the harmonic features stated above. The meditative character of the piece derives from certain features; the use of dynamic contrasts, its modal quality and its stretto, contrapuntal texture. Its most striking harmonic features include the interaction between a dorian mode and a C minor key - a feature which symbolises the use of chromatic alterations in the piece - and the continuous focus on the subdominant as the second important harmonic area. The modal character of the piece and the emphasis on the subdominant harmonic area

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(1) See Chapter 8.

are illustrated in the opening bars (Ex. 39).

In contrast to the predominantly modal character of the opening section, there is a considerable focus on C minor in the middle section (bars 17-48) in particular, bars 22-25 (Ex. 40). The emphasis on the subdominant is very strong in the last section of the work. Thus in bars 57 and 68 the subdominant occurs as the opening and terminal chords of the twelve bar paragraph. It is also reflected in the plagal cadence, bars 65-68. As in Goin to set down the tierce de picardie in the last bar is yet another use, this time a European-based traditional use, of chromatic alteration.

The use of African derived melodies as thematic elements as referred to in the above works of Sowande has become a popular compositional idea among Nigerian composers. As will be seen later, however, while accepting this legacy as an important means of writing "Nigerian" or "African" works, some of the most successful nationalist works by Nigerian composers are those in which the "folk-spirit" of Nigerian music is captured without resort to the use of folk tunes.



CHAPTER SEVENAFRICAN PIANISM

"For those composers interested in cross-cultural musical synthesis (there is) a .... line of evolution in the use of the Western pianoforte in combination with African drums and other instruments of percussion. The piano already displays certain affinities with African music, and by creating a type of African Pianism to blend with African instruments it should be possible to achieve a successful fusion."<sup>(1)</sup>

The piano first appeared in Nigeria in the middle of the nineteenth century and since then has remained popular. Today it is one of the most prominent musical instruments in schools, colleges, universities and in the homes of middle class families. Apart from this, the piano has important similar qualities with Nigerian instruments (such as Ngedegwu - Igbo xylophone and Dundun - Yoruba talking drum) in its melo-rhythmic and percussive character. This makes it one particular instrument which can be favourably used to represent elements of Nigerian music. Of the selected composers in this study, three - Bankole, Uzoigwe and Euba - are very striking in their experiments that use the piano to evoke the textures of African music. In this chapter examples of their works will be analysed to illustrate this approach.

Prominent features of Bankole's style are the preponderant use of Yoruba and Yoruba-derived thematic elements and the use of a complex harmonic-tonal language which often lacks the major-minor polarity of conventional European tonality. His harmonic language, which is reminiscent of the "liberated tonality" of Bartók, makes extensive use of the whole tone scale and its associated interval of the tritone. Other features of Bankole's style include the use of ostinati and pedals, the creation of quasi-bitonal effects through the use of modally or tonally

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(1) Euba, A. "Traditional elements as the basis of New African Art Music" Op.cit. p.55.

directed melodies within a harmonic background which often lacks a tonal focus. While the use of features such as the whole-tone scale, ostinati, pedals and quasi-bitonal passages constitute alternative methods of overcoming the problem of progression which is created through the rejection of conventional tonality, they also highlight Bankole's attempt to provide a musical syntax which maintains strong links with his Yoruba musical tradition.

Thus, although there are similarities between nineteenth century European nationalist and impressionist traditions and Bankole's compositional style in the use of features such as pedals, ostinati, modally inflected harmonies, whole-tone scale, percussive rhythms, poly-rhythms and modal scales, the adoption of these features in his works has a strong nationalist basis since they are features common in Yoruba music.<sup>(1)</sup> Bankole's compositional approach thus recalls one of Phillips's ideas which favours the adoption of those European features that are similar to those of Nigeria by Nigerian composers. It is for this reason Phillips suggested that the harmonic features of European mediaeval modal music (which according to him is similar to Yoruba music) be used to harmonise Yoruba pentatonic melodies for church use instead of European diatonic procedures.<sup>(2)</sup> The similarity between Bankole's style and the often folk-inspired musical language of, for example, Bartók emanates from a similar compositional objective. Bankole, like Bartók, works with musical material that is inspired by his native traditions.

Bankole's early works, such as the Nigerian Suite and Ya Orule clearly establish some of these stylistic features. For example, the second dance of the Nigerian Suite is characterised by the continuous statements of a Yoruba dance melo-rhythm within a densely chromatic

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(1) See Chapter 3.

(2) See Chapter 4.

harmonic texture which often overshadows the G tonality of the piece (Ex.1). The tenuous position of the G tonality is underlined by the fact that it is not until the end of the piece that it is confirmed, and even then, within a chromatic chordal sonority. Ex. 1 recurs in virtually every bar and consequently the piece derives its ternary character mainly from the brief transposition of Ex. 1 to a new pitch level in bars 19-30 and its return to the original level in bars 31-43. There is a predominant emphasis on the organisation of rhythm to create cross rhythms. Tension also arises from the flexibility of rhythmic motion - a feature which derives from the continuously syncopated character of phrases.

The influence of Yoruba music is stronger in Ya Orule which is characterised by a modal (often pentatonic) outlook, an improvisatory identity and the use of ostinato in the left hand which functions as an "inexorable background" for the improvisatory line of the right hand. The right hand line consists mainly of varied repetitions of a Yoruba folk tale tune (Ex. 2). In addition the piece continuously oscillates between a pentatonic scale within which the note D functions as a repose and a D major tonal area.

Bankole's more intimate exposure to European music when he came to England is revealed in his later piano works. As will be shown below, however, the basic stylistic features of the Nigerian Suite and Ya Orule are not abandoned but used within a larger European formal context. The Passion Sonata is by far the most important of Bankole's piano works and it illustrates, significantly, some problems a Nigerian composer faces in his attempt to integrate the African with the European.

The formal outlines of the Sonata are conventional; a sonata form first movement, a ternary (Largo, Scherzo, Largo) second and a rondo finale. The work has a programmatic conception, being "a lament for the Passion and

Crucifixion of Jesus Christ". Thus while the first movement in its restless and agitated character represents a musical painting of "the night they sought to kill him" the second which begins with an emotive slow chordal texture "suggests the esoteric and mystical joy of the crucifixion". The last is "a collection of songs of hope, of sorrow, of sympathy and of religious victory, all coming as it were from the overfull heart of the mother of Jesus".<sup>(1)</sup>

Although, generally, the work shuns conventional procedures in its harmonic-tonal language it often resorts to them to achieve a sense of progression and to link different sections. A major weakness of the work which emanates from the juxtapositions of contrasting harmonic procedures is that it is marked by a highly sectionalised character. This weakness is clearly illustrated in the first movement where the need to articulate and at the same time connect the different sections of a sonata form pose an additional problem. The analysis below, rather than being a detailed study of the work, focusses on the use of the features of Bankole's style referred to above.

The first movement consists of an introduction, bars 1-22, which sets the agitated and restless character of the movement through its perpetuum mobile C pedal and shrill trills (Ex. 3). It anticipates the body of the movement in two ways: by presenting a chord whose C-F sharp tritone foreshadows the tonal relationship between the first and second segments of the exposition and by hinting at the first theme (Ex. 4) in the left hand part of bars 3-4 and bars 7-12 (see Ex. 3).

The first subject, Ex. 4, is a Yoruba-derived theme characterised, typically, by a small melodic ambit, syncopation and an anhemitonic quality. It is presented within an energetic texture which continues to emphasise the C-F sharp tritone.

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(1) Bankole, Ayo: Preface to Passion Sonata.

The bridge passage which follows (bar 49 ff) prolongs the anhemitonic character of Ex. 4 as well as the emphasis on a pedal C before digressing to a transparently diatonic passage (bars 71-79, Ex. 5) which prepares the F sharp minor key of the second segments of the exposition (bars 80-160). The second subject segment (Ex. 6) contrasts very sharply with the first in its less percussive character, and, more significantly, in its more conventional harmonic context. The transition between the two segments of the exposition illustrates the abrupt juxtaposition of contrasting harmonic languages in the movement - a feature which is recalled with prominence in the development.

The development (bars 107-210) is in ternary form whose outer sections make use of a new Yoruba melody (Ex. 7) which is however not unrelated to the first subject in its modal (pentatonic) character. The middle section makes extensive use of Ex. 8 (the adagio link between the exposition and the development, bars 107-112) and especially, the second subject, Ex. 6. The two ideas are often treated sequentially within very chromatic textures. These textures generally rely on those unstable intervals (especially the tritone and the augmented 5th) which have been initiated in the exposition. The treatments of these themes in the development can be observed in Ex. 9 (a-d) which highlights the main harmonic and textural features employed.

The juxtapositions of contrasting harmonic sonorities in the development is recalled in three major ways:

- i) Its ternary character is articulated through the use of modal procedures in the outer sections and a predominantly chromatic character in the middle section.
- ii) Although the second middle section (i.e. bars 125-196) is predominantly chromatic in character, tonally directed paragraphs

(Ex. 9c) often appear as links between chromatic passages as in bars 153-156.

- iii) Quasi-bitonal passages often result from the presentations of the modally conceived Yoruba themes and their derivatives within chromatic ostinato textures, (Ex. 9b, bars 148-151).

The recapitulation represents the materials of the exposition except for the more emphatic preparation of the C minor tonality of the second segment in the bridge passage of bars 281-288. Thus the movement is characterised by an overall progression from the opening bars where tonality is affirmed by pedals on C, to the closing bars where conventional harmonic procedures are employed.

All the distinctive features of the first movement are used prominently in the second - a ternary form which consists of an extensive middle (faster) section. The Largo section, bars 1-34, is further divided into two distinct sections, the first a hymn-like passage (bars 1-19) and the second a Yoruba melody (Ex. 10) whose pentatonic character is overshadowed by the F major diatonic accompaniment. On the whole the Largo section is tonally conceived although chromatic notes are employed as embellishments. The hymn-like section is particularly striking in this regard. This is illustrated in its final bars (21-22) where the tonic anticipation of the dominant seventh chord of bar 20 is delayed through a b VI (bar 21) until the beginning of bar 22 where it is partially resolved.

The Scherzo section, which functions as a development, deviates to a densely chromatic texture which lacks a tonal focus. The section, like the first movement, makes lavish use of the whole-tone scale, the tritone and the augmented fifth. Two prominent motivic elements here are Exx. 11 and 12. While Ex. 11 is derived from the opening Largo, Ex. 12 is derived from the first movement's second theme. These motivic ideas are, in the

Scherzo, continuously repeated in different transpositions within a fantasia-like and directionless harmonic-tonal framework - a prototype of which can be observed in Ex. 12. Thus when the opening Largo section returns in bars 79 ff it has not been convincingly prepared, tonally. To de-emphasise the importance of conventional tonal procedure in the overall conception of the work and to reinforce the importance of modally inspired harmonies this Largo section ends the movement inconclusively with a D minor - A major cadence (bars 98-101). This procedure is reminiscent of Beethoven's modal harmonies in the slow movement of his A minor String Quartet Op. 132.

The third movement is a five-part rondo whose main thematic ideas are given in Ex. 13a-c. The Yoruba-derived rondo theme (Ex. 13a) is particularly striking for its fragmentary, metrically unstable character. As a result of its unstable pulse and its ambivalent modal character (it makes use of both the major and minor 3rd and 7th) the rondo section has a generally agitated character which contrasts with the hymn-like, diatonic quality of the first episode and the slow homophonic texture of the longer second. There is a notable emphasis, in the Chopinesque second episode, on the use of conventional harmonic progressions lavishly embellished by chromatic notes (Ex. 13c, bars 59-61).

The Passion Sonata is striking for its highly rhythmic and percussive character - a feature which is noticeable in its main thematic elements. The rhythmic and percussive character of the work often relies on the proliferation of dynamic markings, and they often perform important structural functions. For example, in the Scherzo of the second movement, the link between Ex. 11 (bars 35-36) and the preceding Largo (bars 1-22) is made prominent through the use of dynamic accents to articulate the chromatic descent, a motivic feature initiated in the Largo. Also, the movement to the climactic outburst of bars 75-76 relies on the use of

percussive accents and slurs to destabilise the background 12/8 metre of the movement. Through a metric mutation and therefore a faster rate of movement in bars 72 and 73, the Scherzo moves to bar 74 where the metre acquires a temporary hemiola character before bursting into the allargando chord-cluster of bar 75 which provides a resolution to the preceding rhythmic tension.

Inherent in the eclectic character of the Passion Sonata is the fact that its varied stylistic material is not well synthesised, with the result that the work possesses a structural outlook which consists of disparate paragraphs and sections which are not well integrated. This is a feature which inhibits the flow of the work. In another piano work, English Winter Birds, written in 1961, two years after the Passion Sonata, the use of Yoruba-derived modal themes and heterophonic, modally inflected, harmonies within a European formal framework is integrated with greater assurity.

Its first movement is a Sonata form (see Fig. I) shorter in length than that of the Passion Sonata but complete. Like the Passion Sonata, English Winter Birds does not use the customary tonal relationships between its thematic ideas, all of which are Yoruba-derived and are therefore generally short, repetitive and fragmentary. In addition they are characterised by restricted melodic ambit and a modal quality vividly exemplified in the flattened seventh quality of the opening theme, Ex. 14a. The use of rhythmic ostinati - a pervading accompanimental pattern in the movement - as well as off-beat phrasing of melodic accents are also illustrated in these opening bars (see Ex. 14a, bars 3-9) where the confirmation of the background C tonality relies on the ostinato rhythmic patterns. The use of folk-song derived ideas as thematic elements in this work and the Passion Sonata is akin to the song influence on Schubert's piano sonatas.



FIGURE IOverview of Form : 1st Movement of English Winter Birds

	Sections	Bars	Themes	Key
EXPOSITION	1st segment	1-35	Ex. 14a	C-E C/A <sup>b</sup> conflict
	(Short transition)	36-39	-	E ) Gradual emergence of E tonality D sharp B.15 RH. B28 established B36.
	2nd segment	40-68	Ex. 14b	E
DEVELOPMENT	Development	69-95	Consists mainly of the 2-note motivic element of Ex. 14b.	Generally unstable
RECAP-ITULATION	1st segment	95-109	Ex. 14a	Unstable
	2nd segment	110-118	Ex. 14b	E-C

As a result of the restricted melodic ambit and the fragmentary nature of the thematic ideas in English Winter Birds it is often difficult to demarcate important thematic areas and transitional passages. For example, while bars 13-35 could be heard as part of the transition to the second thematic segment of the exposition, the preponderance of materials similar to Ex. 14a link the passage to being heard as part of the first theme segment. When considerations of key are taken into account, however, this problem seems to be resolved. Bars 28-39 function as a gradual preparation towards the E modality of the second thematic segment of bars 40 ff. The quasi-bitonal passage of bars 28-35 makes a strong reference to E in the right hand. E is eventually confirmed in bars 36-39 after which the second theme (Ex.14b) appears. Apart from the quasi-bitonal passage of bars 59-64 where the C-E relationship between the first and second segments of the exposition is vertically highlighted (Ex. 15) the whole of the second thematic segment is characterised by octave doublings and unisons. This contrasts very sharply with the contrapuntal character of the first section and constitutes a major way through which the two segments are differentiated.

The considerable tension generated in the development, bars 69-96 rely on the exclusive use of the basic features of the exposition:

- i) the extensive use of the whole-tone scale and its associated tritone interval;
- ii) the preponderance of changes in tempo and dynamics, and
- iii) the exploration of different ranges of the piano.

Ex. 16 illustrates the use of the whole-tone scale and in the opening bars (69-79) of the development. Fluctuations in tempo and dynamics as well as the use of contrasting ranges of the piano can be observed in virtually all parts of the development.

The recapitulation recreates the materials of the exposition in a condensed form. Two main features differentiate it from the exposition. The clear focus on C (in bars 3-9) and the modal passage of bars 40-59 (of the exposition) are both missing. The C-E relationship of the exposition is, however, recalled in the bitonal passage of bars 110 ff where Ex. 15 (bars 59-65) reappears. It is not until the last bar that the C-E conflict is resolved in favour of the background C. Finally the often complex harmonic language of the work derives from the prevalence of linearly conceived melodic phrases, a feature which recalls the incidental harmonies of of African music.

The second and last movement (*Andante cantabile*) contrasts with the first in its rhapsodic, improvisatory outlook and very expressive character. Its formal outline tends to combine elements of ternary, rondo and variation in the five appearances of Ex. 17 its main theme. It is typified by the preponderant use of coloristic dissonances - a feature highlighted in its main theme. This theme evokes the character of islamised - Yoruba songs - in its semitonal dissonances, melismatic character, repetitive chant-like phrasing and the lack of a consistent rhythmic pulse.<sup>(1)</sup> These characteristics are extensively used in the development of Ex. 17 as can be observed in Ex. 18 where segments of the theme as they appear in different sections of the movement have been aligned in a vertical format.

The harmonic language of the movement is characterised by combining unstable sonorities which make use of the tritone and the augmented 5th with "non-functional" triadic chords. Such triadic elements which may momentarily create tonal allusions often resolve back to tonally-vague sonorities. The prevalence of this harmonic procedure (Ex. 17, bars 1-4)

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(1) For a study on the influence of Islamic culture on Yoruba music see: Omibiyi, M. "Islamic impact on Yoruba music", African Notes, Vol. 2, 1980.

is an important basis for the pervading tonal tension of the piece. The continuous delineation of D as a fundamental note of the movement relies mainly on its frequent appearances in important metric positions both as a melodic note in the main theme and as part of a triadic chord in the left hand accompaniment (Ex. 17). By confirming the importance of the note D, not through conventional harmonic procedures but through referential repetitions of the note at important places, the harmonic-tonal conception of the movement directly echoes the modal character of the main theme in which the note of repose is confirmed by its repetitions. There is also a conceptual relationship between the rhapsodic character of the main theme and that of the movement. Thus both the formal and the harmonic procedures of the movement are derived from the Seminal features of its Yoruba-inspired theme.

The coherent harmonic and formal character of the movement is paralleled by a striking variety of moods. Variations in texture as well as fluctuations of tempo and dynamics are utilised with significant dramatic effects. Two passages which symbolise the contrasting moods of the movement are the bravura whole-tone passage of bars 138 (Ex. 19) and the tranquil passage of bars 164-167 which approaches a perfect silence in the last bar of the work (Ex. 20).

The coherent harmonic language of English Winter Birds derives mainly from the fact that the transparent diatonic passages of the Passion Sonata are abandoned, with the result that the work relies solely on the use of ostinati, pedals and referential repetitions to confirm, periodically, background and sectional keys. As a result of its short length the problems of continuity and coherence are reduced to a manageable level as they are in Prayer - Sowande's organ work examined in the last chapter.

Despite the prominent use of Yoruba and Yoruba-derived features of the two piano works, it must be mentioned that they still possess a

largely European texture. Although elements such as the whole-tone scale, ostinati, percussive and polyrhythmic textures and pedals are commonly used in Yoruba vocal music, their deployment in the two works take place within predominantly European formal and harmonic conventions as we have shown above. We have mentioned in chapter three the fact that elements which are characteristic of Yoruba music are also found in other non-African societies. Thus it is not enough that such elements are present in works which aim at reflecting an African character. It is the way in, as well as the structural context within, which they are used that will or will not give them an African identity. As will be shown in Chapters 9, 10 and 11 it is in the vocal works of Bankole that the importance of Yoruba traditional music on the derivation of his melodic, harmonic and formal procedures is given greater articulation.

Compared with Bankole's piano works, those of Uzoigwe generally maintain greater links with traditional Nigerian music. As we have said in Chapter 5, his three main piano works, Four Nigerian Dances, Lustra Variations and Sketches show a very strong commitment to evoking instrumental procedures of Igbo traditional music especially in the ways themes and motives are derived and developed.

The Four Nigerian Dances summarise important features of Uzoigwe's compositional style. These are: the use of harmonic sonorities, similar to those of Bankole (which although they are tonally conceived do not employ conventional European procedures); the use of atonal, serial, technique; and the employment of a formal procedure in which motivic elements undergo a process of continuous variation. Although the first three dances make use of European forms such as ternary and binary, the last, which foreshadows the other two piano works, resorts to improvisatory-like techniques

inspired by Igbo instrumental music. We shall briefly look at each of these dances highlighting their main features but focussing on those elements which are derived from Nigerian traditional music. In its use of static, rhythmic ostinato and colouristic dissonances, (which arise from the prevalence of chords built on fourths, including tritones, semitonal voice leadings, superimposed chords and chord clusters) the first and shortest dance of the Four Nigerian Dances maintains affinities with the works of Bartók and Stravinsky as (Ex. 21a, b and c). Tonal references in the dance are established through a recurrent chordal area. This referential tonal area (see Ex. 21a) is formed in part through the use of ostinati - a feature which pervades the entire dance and from which its dance-like character derives. Both the pervading ostinato rhythm and a recurrent melodic idea, Ex. 21a are Igbo derived.

The harmonic language of the second dance is more tempered, being less chromatic than that of the first. The piece divides into two main sections each of which has a ternary arrangement. The first section, bars 1-44, functions as a prelude to the second more important section of the work which is based on a Yoruba theme (Ex. 22). Prominent features of the first section are the use of parallel harmony, its generally pan-diatonic harmonic character in which an open chord on D is established as a referential tonal area by a pedal drone. This is despite the background C major of the piece. The final bars of the first section anticipate the Yoruba theme of the second, more diatonic, section where, in bars 40-45, the passage deviates into a rhythmic variant of the standard pattern which is also seminally presented in the Yoruba tune itself. Important features of the second section are the use of syncopated melo-rhythmic lines often combined to create conflicting contrapuntal rhythmic textures and the use of an extensive modal passage (bars 66-99) which provides a commentary on the Yoruba tune.

The third dance returns to the complex harmonies of the first. Like the two preceding dances it makes extensive use of Igbo-derived rhythmic and chordal ostinatos and parallel harmonies. Its sporadic bravura character derives from the periodic use of a dissonant, tumultuous paragraph Ex. 23. The dance divides into two main sections. The first 48 bars make prominent use of a variant of the standard pattern as in the RH of bars 9, 13, 17, 19. while it has a generally, tonally unstable character, the second (bars 49-87) has a contrasting, heterophonic-modal character (Ex. 24). It is conceived in a pentatonic scale on G flat. A prominent feature of the section is the use of an Igbo-derived call and response melody whose continuity is characterised by irregular phrasing. As Ex. 25 shows that this irregular phrasing derives from the fact that the length of the "answer" bars is progressively shortened while that of the "call" increases. This elliptical procedure is directly evocative of the developing overlapping call and response pattern of Igbo vocal music.

The organisational structure of the fourth dance is remarkably different from the first three and relies on an atonal framework and pre-determined melo-rhythmic motives. According to Uzoigwe the use of different pre-determined melo-rhythmic strands in the dance, emanates from an objective to provide a sound (musical) evocation of a traditional Igbo Fine Art tradition. This tradition, known as ULI, is a style of drawing which uses line formations to decorate traditional utensils such as pots and calabashes. This art form has been borrowed by contemporary Igbo academically-trained sculptors and ceramists such as Ben Enwiowu and Uche Okeke. In Uzoigwe's fourth dance, the pre-determined melo-rhythmic strands which are meant to evoke those lines are used in various vertical and horizontal relationships. But while the structural use of pre-determined melo-rhythmic strands is a musical re-interpretation of a Fine Art tradition, it also represents a

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re-enactment of a purely musical style inherent in traditional Nigerian instrumental music. Uzoigwe rightly believes that the concept of tone row is an important element of traditional Nigerian instrumental music. This is because traditional Nigerian instruments often have a limited number of melodic pitches. Thus, in an ensemble, an instrument may have a limited number of melodic pitches. When that instrument also has specific rhythmic functions, such as the Yoruba gong with its Konkolo<sup>(1)</sup> rhythm, this often implies the association of specific melo-rhythmic functions with a particular instrument. This is a procedure which suggests an element of pre-determinism in performance-compositions of Yoruba music.

In Uzoigwe's Dance, this compositional premise is not used rigidly since pre-determined motives often undergo variation processes. The intervals used in the motives (see Ex. 26) are not derived from a pre-conceived row. Melodic pitches are often deliberately used to reflect very chromatic, atonal writing. This is done by juxtaposing motives which use different notes of the chromatic vocabulary (Ex. 27). The piece has a ternary character (A, bars 1-24; B, 25-81 and C, 82-105) which derives from the repetition of motives, in their original versions in the outer sections. In the middle section these motives are treated to variation processes such as retrograde, inversion and transposition. In addition, the middle section is characterised by the use of intervallic and rhythmic fragments derived from the main motives. In Ex. 26 which shows the treatment of major motivic ideas of the work in the different sections, the motivic process of the work can be observed in microcosm. Despite its ternary outlook, the work has a generally improvisatory character since the criteria for the juxtaposition of motives are generally not systematic. In addition, its contrapuntal rhythmic character as well as its pervadingly irregular phrasing procedures (see Ex. 27) are directly evocative of the

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(1) The standard pattern: See Chapter 3, p. 47



complex rhythmic textures of Igbo music within which regular metre is not often present.

The evocation of the rhythmic textures of Igbo instrumental music within an atonal framework is explored further in Sketches, a work written in 1977, a year after the Four Nigerian Dances. Like the last of the Four Nigerian Dances, Sketches is characterised by:

- i) the use of rhythmic motives which consist of notes of short durational values, reminiscent of Igbo melo-rhythms as its main thematic elements. These motives are often used in:
- ii) a pervadingly interlocking call and response manner;
- iii) the predominance of a complex rhythmic texture;
- iv) the use of a largely free motivic process generally evocative of an improvisational idiom, and;
- v) a strong percussive character.

The work consists of three pieces which are all related motivically, and each of which is conceived as part of a single formal entity. Thus the three pieces are united through the use of recurring intervallic properties, the most important of which is the augmented fourth. Others are the perfect fifth (and its inversion), the minor second and the major third. The dominant motivic phrases of each piece (none of which is derived from a pre-conceived row) and their intervallic inter-relationship are illustrated in Ex. 28-30. To reinforce the motivic unity, the three pieces are connected through the use of a link paragraph which appears at the end of the first and second dances. This paragraph represents a motivic summary of the whole work.

Although the three pieces make use of similar intervallic properties, the derivation of motives in each of them is unique. In the first, each of the main motivic ideas is conceived on a micro-chromatic level, that is, a principle whereby a single pitch is often not used twice within each motif. This implies that the chromatic density of each motif is directly proportional to the number of durational units within it (see Exx. 28 and 31). The main variation process of the dance is characterised essentially by the continuous variation of an idea (Ex. 28) introduced in bar 1. As Ex. 31 (bars 20-24) illustrates, it is often broken into shorter fragments which are then used in different transpositions. This procedure continues until the final bars.

In the second, longest, piece however there is a considerable emphasis on note repetition within motivic phrases (see Ex. 29 and 32). Thus it has a less chromatic character than the first. Its formal procedure recalls those of the last of the Four Nigerian Dances in its use of developmental techniques such as inversion and retrograde to sectionalise the piece. But unlike the Four Nigerian Dances which articulates a ternary form through the repetition of phrases at their original pitches in the outer sections, this piece presents a variation process which tends to emphasise a continuous process of variation. In Ex. 32, which highlights some of the ways the main motives are used in the different parts of the piece, this formal characteristic can be observed in miniature.

The third piece has a more regular rhythmic and metric character. It functions as a large-scale resolution to the first two dances. In addition, it presents a ternary form whose middle section is only vaguely articulated mainly through the temporary cessation of the octave doublings (bars 9-15) and the appearance of an A pedal (bars 10 and 15). Unlike the second dance, melodic patterns generally recur on the same pitch levels across the three sections of the piece.

By abandoning the use of conventional European metric procedures, the organisation of phrases in Sketches reflects an appropriate method of expressing the "multi-chronometric" idiom of Igbo instrumental music. In the work, especially in the second piece, motivic phrases are often of unequal, linear, densities and they are often conceived as phrases existing within an irregularly divided temporal space - hence the use of half bar lines (Ex. 28-31). They demarcate different motivic phrases; they do not suggest a metric conception. As a result, the use of constant metric changes in Four Nigerian Dances - an attempt to cope with the irregularity of phrase lengths - is avoided in Sketches. In such a musical structure as we have in Sketches, where there is no long span metric background, the significance of rhythmic features such as syncopation and off-beat phrasings become very minimal, and it is in such a rhythmic organisation that the complex rhythmic textures of African instrumental music can be captured. One only needs to compare the transcriptions of Igbo, Ukom, drum-row music, made by Uzoigwe himself (see Ex. 35a) with the rhythmic procedures of Sketches to see the extent to which he has succeeded in capturing the textures of Igbo music in this work.

Finally, the proliferation of accents in the pieces in addition to the short rhythmic figurations and their short durational units underline Uzoigwe's exploitation of the percussive character of the piano in the work. The constant, often stretto-like, dialogue between the two complex contrapuntal melo-rhythmic phrases in the second piece (Ex. 29) is particularly evocative of the overlapping call and response dialogue between two African master drummers.

A year before Sketches was written and shortly after Four Nigerian Dances, Uzoigwe composed the Lustra Variations (1976). Although the evocation of traditional rhythmic textures formed the main compositional objective in Lustra Variations, the work employs an organisational approach

which is considerably different from Sketches and Four Nigerian Dances. The title of the work is inspired by Christopher Okigbo's poem, Lustra Variations. While there is no programmatic connection between Okigbo's poem and Uzoigwe's work, the artistic kinship between these two men - a relationship more vividly shown in Uzoigwe's largest orchestral work, Watermaid - exemplifies the interaction that often takes place between contemporary Igbo composers, poets, dramatists, painters and sculptors.

Unlike the Four Nigerian Dances which make use of predetermined melo-rhythms in the evocation of ULI traditional drawing, the Lustra Variations, as the title indicates, consists of a set of variations on a single thematic idea (Ex. 36a). In each of the variations, motivic and intervallic elements derived from Ex. 36a are developed to form different but related melodic ideas. A motivic-thematic summary is provided in Ex. 36(a-e) and highlights the major ways in which Ex. 36a is used in each of the variations. Although the work does not employ conventional harmonic procedures and although it does not consist of a single binding or overall tonal goal, many of its passages present clear tonal orientations. The existence of such tonal areas often derives from the rhythmic procedures of the piece which imitate the hierarchical procedures of Igbo instrumental techniques. All the major features which we have identified in Sketches also appear here: a pervadingly contrapuntal rhythmic texture, a generally percussive character, the use of the principle of continuous variations and the employment of metrically unstable rhythmic motion. A unique feature of the work, is the way in which its Igbo-derived hierarchical rhythmic procedures have influenced its harmonic-tonal language.

It is in the opening bars (bars 1-16) where the main theme Ex. 36a is combined with fragments derived from it, that we have one of the most chromatic paragraphs of the piece. Even then tonal orientations are still shown in their occasional octave doublings and in the referential

appearances of a note (G) in the opening and closing bars of the paragraph (bars 1 and 17). These two features (octave doublings and referential pitch or chordal centres) recur continuously. The first variation (bars 17-58) contrasts sharply with the first paragraph since the first variation is based mainly on a 3-note motif, derived from Ex. 36, to evoke the sometimes minimalistic character of Igbo instrumental music. It is in the third and fourth variations that we have one of the strongest tonal orientations in the work. In the third variation (bars 78-105) there is a strong tonal identity which relies on:

- i) the pedal appearances of the note D in the opening and closing bars (bars 78-81 and 101-105);
- ii) the use of a continuous chromatic descent, in the left hand, which gives the illusion of harmonic movement;
- iii) the considerable prominence given to the triadic relations of D (F in bars 93-95 and A in bar 92).

The strong tonal character of the fourth variation (bars 106-150) derives from a relentless repetition of an E<sup>b</sup> open chord.

The frequent appearances of pedal and ostinato material, which establish sectional tonal areas, and the sporadic reductions in texture from contrapuntal layers to unison and octave doublings (especially in the final variation) are, quite often, inevitable manifestations of the background rhythmic conception of the work. The conception of rhythmic phrases along the hierarchical procedures of the Igbo drum language is vividly shown in the fourth and fifth variations. Thus the continuously reiterated crotchet beat in bars 78-105 (variation 4) functions as a stabilising time line for the more complex phrases of the right hand. This time line is continued in the fifth variation as a two-note ostinato (Ex. 37a). Ex. 37a

conflicts with another rhythm, Ex. 37b, which functions like the gong rhythm. Both Exx. 37a and b provide a recurrent rhythmic background to the improvisatory top line. In the final variation of the work, fragments of the standard pattern (Ex. 38) appear occasionally, with their 6/8 character providing sporadic conflict against the background 3/4 of the work (cf bars 174, 186, 188, 190). The occasional appearances of this pattern (instead of its perpetual reiteration as is the case in traditional music) represents an "adumbration" of the principle of time line and it foreshadows the use of similar procedure in Uzoigwe's orchestral work, Watermaid.<sup>(1)</sup>

Compared with the piano works of Bankole examined earlier in this chapter, the piano works of Uzoigwe, discussed above, present stronger links with traditional African music. Abandoning the conventional European formal heritage of Bankole's works, Uzoigwe's piano works reflect a stronger African orientation, notably in their use of percussive melo-rhythms deployed along the formal procedures similar to those found in Igbo traditional instrumental music. These works, like his orchestral and vocal works to be examined later,<sup>(2)</sup> reflect Uzoigwe's intimate knowledge of his Igbo native culture - a knowledge which, as we have noted in Chapter 5, derives from his youth, his training at Nsukka and his ethnomusicological study at Belfast.

It is in the works of Euba that we find the most articulate and most successful use of the piano to imitate and evoke the textures of African instrumental music. This is not surprising: he has devoted a significant part of his life studying Yoruba musical culture and has consistently made the objective of creating works which have strong, non-superficial, African links a central theme of his academic and

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(1) See Chapter 8.

(2) See Chapters 8 and 9.

professional career. This particular commitment is reflected in his series of publications from which we have quoted in Chapter 5. Four works summarise Euba's experimental use of the piano and they will be examined in some details here. They are Wanderer, Scenes from Traditional Life, Three Songs and Igi nla so.

As the first major work in which there is a conscious effort to use African elements, The Wanderer (for cello and piano) occupies a unique position among Euba's compositions. Prior to the writing of this work, his attempts at fusing African elements with European idioms had existed mainly in vocal arrangements such as the Six Yoruba Songs (1959). The title of the work is derived from the central theme (Ex. 41) a Yoruba song which narrates the experience of a barren woman who had to offer sacrifices to Ela, the Yoruba god of fertility, so that she could have a child.

A major feature of the work is the use of a varied pitch structure in which atonal and modal procedures are freely mixed. The interaction between modal and atonal procedures recurs in a more elaborate form in a later work, Three Songs. In addition to its varied pitch structure, The Wanderer consists of rhythmic as well as generative procedures which reflect a considerable African conception, highlighting Euba's earliest approach to the use of complex rhythmic textures - a procedure which was to become a major stylistic element of his nationalist aspirations. The work will be examined under four main headings to illustrate the interaction between African and European elements in it and to show how it anticipates the character of other major works like Igi nla so, Scenes from Traditional Life and Abiku. These headings are a) Variety of pitch structure; b) Generative procedures; c) Rhythmic character and structure, and d) Overview of form.

# A) Variety of Pitch Structure

The work is conceived mainly in an atonal style. It is, however, also characterised by:

- i) a considerable use of Yoruba derived modal elements;
- ii) an abundance of octave doublings;
- iii) the prevalence of the voice leading in semitones;
- iv) the occurrences of melodic phrases which have a diatonic (tonal) orientation; and
- v) the employment of an abridged sonata form (see Fig. II) which helps to delineate principal (thematic) areas and subsidiary passages. All these features point to vestiges of tonality in the work.

The three main subsections in The Wanderer reflect the variety which characterises the organisation of pitch elements. The atonal structure is highlighted in the opening paragraphs (bars 1-25) where two important thematic elements are presented. The first (Ex. 39a) is distinguished by a rising sequence and two main intervals - the perfect 4th and the tritone, while the second (Ex. 39b), a more lyrical idea, makes prominent use of the semitone.

In contrast to the opening paragraph, the second, bars 26-58, which functions as a long transition to the Piu Allegro; con fuoco, is characterised by melodic phrases which have a diatonic orientation. The most prominent phrase is Ex. 39c.

While the chromatic character of the opening paragraph is continued in the Piu Allegro; con fuoco section of bars 59-96, the diatonic orientation of the second paragraph also features prominently especially in the cello part (Ex. 39d, bars 59-62). In addition to combining both



the chromatic character of the first paragraph and the diatonic feature of the second, the con fuoco section also anticipates the Yoruba modal elements of the Largo (bars 96-132) principally in the use of parallel harmonies, especially fourths and fifths. Ex. 40 (bars 64-66) illustrates the combinatorial character of the con fuoco section with regard to the use of pitch elements. In contrast to the cello melody, the piano part is very chromatic with a preponderance of parallel harmonies. Prominent harmonic intervals here include the perfect and augmented fourths both of which were initiated in the first paragraph, bars 1-25.

The importance of the Largo section lies in the fact that the most significant thematic idea of the piece appears there. This melody, Ex. 41 is a Yoruba song which in its charm and solemnity constitutes a perfect example of Yoruba ritual. Its most distinctive features are a free, chant-like rhythm and a modal identity which is characterised by a general absence of semitones. The Yoruba identity of the theme, is acknowledged by its accompanying textures, mainly through the use of repetitive and parallel harmonies usually in fourths and fifths which are used as punctuating phrases. The use of repetitive and parallel harmonies continues until the end of the section. So does the anhemitonal element of the main theme. These two vestiges of African modal procedures, however, feature within the overwhelming atonal conception of the work. The interaction between atonality and elements of African (Yoruba inspired) heterophonic procedures and occasional residues of tonality, as shown in the first half of the piece, is a pervading feature of the work representing a major means of sustaining tension.

## B) Generative Procedures

One significant feature of The Wanderer is the use of developmental techniques which are commonly found in Yoruba instrumental music. The reasons for the prevalence of such techniques are not hard to find if one

recalls the consciousness which informs the use of African elements in the work. In the absence of tonality, the rhythmic procedures commonly found in Yoruba music provide an alternate solution to the problem of the continuation of dialogue. Although Euba was yet to undertake his major research on Yoruba Dundun music (a research whose results are most vividly evident in a work like Abiku<sup>(1)</sup>) evidences of his intuitive knowledge of Yoruba instrumental procedures can be detected in many sections of The Wanderer. The most notable examples of such procedures are:

- i) The dovetailing of short motivic phrases to form longer composite materials;
- ii) The elongation of phrases through a repetition of its last segment;
- iii) The variation of a melodic segment through emphatic repetition of notes or segments within it;
- iv) The evocation of the principle of registral melodies - by which is meant - melodies which are defined not through the use of specific interval properties, but mainly through their contour patterns;
- v) The use of monotonal punctuations;
- vi) The breaking of phrases into short punctuating rhythmic particles; and
- vii) The use of rhythmic variations on repetitive phrases.<sup>(2)</sup>

Instances of these procedures in The Wanderer are given in

Ex. 42 (a-g).

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- (1) See Chapter 8.
  - (2) For a demonstration of the use of these features in Yoruba music, see Olaniyan, O. op.cit. pp.201 ff.

C) Rhythmic Character and Texture

The work makes prominent use of features commonly found in African music. These include polyrhythms, polymeter, off beat phrasing of melodic accents and staggered entries of phrases. In the exposition, these elements are conceived within a structural framework in which there is a progressive complexity and stratification of texture. One notable feature of the three sub-sections of the exposition (see Fig. II) is the use of successively shorter durational units of movement in each; a quaver in the first subsection (bars 1-56), a semiquaver in the second (bars 57-96), and a demisemiquaver in the third (bars 97-132). Although the Largo tempo of bars 97-132 offsets the tendency for an increasingly fast pulse in the exposition, the progressive stratification of texture which pervades the exposition helps to establish an increasingly dramatic intensity. Compared with the first, the second and the third subsections in the exposition feature a more stratified texture which is achieved principally through rhythmic differentiation, staggered entries of phrases and contrasting melodic directions as shown in Ex. 43 (b and c) which is a microcosm of the subsections. The increasing dramatic intensity of the exposition also derives from a progression from the series of articulated and definite metric pulses of the first fifty bars to the obscure metric organisation which prevails in bars 51 ff. This feature comes as a result of the increasing syncopation and staggered entries in this section of the work. The stratified texture of the piece is also a manifestation of another important conceptual basis - the evocation of the "element of communal performance"<sup>(1)</sup> by which is meant an attempt by the composer to capture the ensemble setting of traditional (Yoruba) instrumental music. The often fragmentary character and shortness of motivic elements in the piece underline their similarity to Yoruba melo-rhythms. Since most of the

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(1) A term first used by Uzoigwe: op.cit. p. 100

motivic phrases and thematic material in the work are conceived linearly, there is a constant dialogue between the piano and the cello. This dialogue often exists antiphonally as a call and response pattern in both the overlapping and demarcated forms. The most effective use of the call and response procedure occurs in the last seventeen bars of the work where the cello functions as a "cantor" while the piano provides answering phrases. While the piano provides unchanging responsorial material the cello undergoes a continuous process of variation through the use of rhythmic and intervallic changes (Ex. 44).<sup>(1)</sup> In addition to its responsorial idea the piano provides irregularly placed chordal patches to punctuate the phrases of the cello (bars 229, 231, 232, 234 and 239).

Framed by fluctuations of tempo, dynamics and metre, this passage provides a dramatic and appropriate end to the work as a whole. Despite the continuous dialogue between the piano and the cello, the most effective means of evoking the element of communal performance in The Wanderer is through the integrated use of dynamics, articulation and registral contrasts to differentiate motivic phrases. In addition is the prevalence of angular phrases. Clear use of these elements can be found in bars 51 ff, (Ex. 45).







#### D) Formal Features

The Wanderer employs a structural outline which can be seen as an abridged sonata form framed by a continuous process of variation. As Fig. II shows, the work divides into two broad sections, the second being a variation of the first. Virtually all the thematic material in the exposition recurs in the recapitulation. The absence of a development is compensated for in the continuous variations of thematic material. While the use of an abridged sonata form helps to provide a structural anchor

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(1) The piano part is regarded as an unchanging contour material even though it undergoes continuous intervallic changes (i.e. it plays a registral melody). The cello part on the other hand undergoes contour as well as intervallic changes.

FIGURE IIOverview of Form : The Wanderer

Tempo	Sections	Bars	Themes	Prevalent unit of movt. in each section	Comments
ALLEGRO NON TROPPO	EXPOSITION	1-25	a&b (Ex.39)		Atonal
		25-58	c (Ex.39)		Diatonic
PIU ALLEGRO CON FUOCO		59-96	d (Ex.39)		Chromatic with occasional diatonic melodies
LARGO		97-132	e (Ex.41)		a) Main theme - a Yoruba tune appears. b) Chromatic with preponderance of modal features
ALLEGRO NON TROPPO	RECAP-ITULATION	133-218	Ex.39 (a,b,c,d)		Atonal
		219-246	Ex.41 (e)		Atonal

for the work, there is a general freedom of approach in the presentation of material. Three main features underline this freedom:

- i) the continuous variation of thematic/motivic ideas - a procedure which often relies on the generative procedures earlier mentioned and which continues until the very last bars;
- ii) the use of free atonal procedures; and
- iii) the use of notational symbols which evoke an atmosphere of spontaneity, the most prominent being those which indicate fluctuations in tempo (cf. bars 218, 219, 220)

While in the first section, the exposition, there is an overall increase in dramatic intensity, the recapitulation is characterised by a more stable texture. Tempo changes exist but they do not have the same structural impact as they do in the exposition. They are often used, as in bars 185-191, for transient, local effects. In addition, the semiquaver remains the dominating unit of durational movement, the major exception being the last seventeen bars where the demi-semiquaver becomes the main unit of progression.

Despite the use of a Yoruba thematic idea and Yoruba inspired rhythmic and formal procedures in the work, Euba, reflecting on the character of The Wanderer a year later, realised that traditional Nigerian instruments have to be used to reinforce its African character. Although The Wanderer is characterised by the use of a process of continuous thematic and motivic variation (a procedure germane to African instrumental and vocal forms), its formal conception is still governed by European sonata form. As already mentioned in Chapter 5, it is as a result of these considerations that, a year later, he wrote works such as Igi nla so and Three Yoruba Songs (which make use of traditional Nigerian

instruments) and six years later, Scenes from Traditional Life. We shall look at Scenes from Traditional Life first before examining Igi nla so and Three Yoruba Songs which are the two most 'African' of Euba's works which make use of the piano. Compared with The Wanderer, the work shows in stronger terms Euba embracing Yoruba derived procedures in the derivation of themes and in form.

Scenes from Traditional Life consists of three pieces each of which presents slightly different organisational principles. Viewed collectively the pieces outline a structural form in which the second represents the climactic point and the third provides a resolution in the relatively stable and dance-like character. Like Uzoigwe's works which attempt to imitate traditional Nigerian instrumental procedures, Scenes from Traditional Life is characterised by the use of predetermined melo-rhythmic motives and atonality. It should be remembered that Uzoigwe's piano works bear influences from those of Euba. As discussed in Chapter 5 Uzoigwe was familiar with the works of Euba before he wrote his own piano works. The ways in which predetermined rhythmic motives are used in Scenes from Traditional Life however, differ significantly from those of Uzoigwe. The first piece is in three sections: (A) bars 1-16; (B) 17-44 and (C) 45-65. Each section is delineated through the use of pauses and rests (bars 16 and 44) and the use of a referential cadence pattern (bars 15 and 16, 43 and 44). In each of its cadential appearances this pattern (Ex. 46) is marked by higher registers and dynamic articulation. As Ex. 47 shows, the main melo-rhythmic phrases of the piece are generally short and fragmentary. Ex. 47 also shows that these phrases are introduced in the first section while the second and third sections perform conventional roles of elaboration and recapitulation. In conversation with the writer, Euba indicated that the rhythmic patterns which these phrases employ are predetermined and there is a general emphasis on inventing phrases which

have different lengths and rhythmic figurations (see Ex. 47). Three main procedures can be discerned in the generation of pitch elements in the piece. These are:

- i) melodic derivation from a predetermined tone row (see Ex. 47);
- ii) melodic derivation through intervallic variation of phrases originally derived from the row; and
- iii) the use of pitch elements not directly generated from the row.

The use of these procedures can be observed in Ex. 47. The twelve notes of a series do not generally appear intact; melodic phrases are short and therefore use only limited notes of the row; these phrases are often juxtaposed with those whose pitches are not generated from the row. For instance, while motives B1 and B2 are derived from the row, as Ex. 47 shows, they often occur with motive C2 (as in bars 13, 14 and 15) which is not directly generated from the row. Similar examples can be found in bars 17, 19 and 23. Thus the row only serve as an occasional point of reference rather than an absolute index of intervallic properties of the piece. Ex. 47 illustrates the restrained use of the row and some of the transformations which motivic elements undergo. The deviations from the row can be seen as a means of generating melodic variety to balance the limited pre-composed rhythmic phrases. Like The Wanderer the deployment of rhythmic phrases in the piece is characterised by contrapuntal texture and metric instability. The overriding importance of the elements of rhythm over pitch in this dance is emphasised by the general lack of a systematic approach to pitch derivation in contrast to its pre-planned rhythmic vocabulary. This particular feature sheds light on the strong African heritage of the piece.

The second piece is characterised by more complex and diversified rhythmic, melodic and metric elements but, paradoxically, its total form



features a less dynamic character than the first. For example, in the first piece three sections are articulated. Though motivic correspondences are maintained across the sections, each of them generates new distinctive features. Thus sectional delineations are relatively clear and sectional functions are discernible despite the pervading element of consistent variation.

In the second piece, the element of consistent variation still operates but with less dynamism. Sectional divisions still exist (Section (A), bars 1-18; Section (B), bars 19-44; Section (C), bars 45-58) but, again, with less articulation. Four structural features support these conclusions:

- i) The different sections of the piece show that virtually the same set of melo-rhythmic phrases are used in them. In most of their appearances (in the different sections) they generally retain their original pitch elements. For example except for the elements in bars 23 and 27, all the motives of the second section have appeared in the first section at exactly the same pitch levels. In the third section the only new ideas are in the upper parts of bars 51, 53, 54 and 55.
- ii) Unlike the first piece, where the use of dynamics helps to accentuate sectional differences by articulating different levels of dramatic content in each of the sections, its use in the second only emphasises local moments: a generally undulating line of progression is maintained in each of the three sections with almost uniform interest.
- iii) Across the three sections of the work, the main variation procedure is a constant reshuffling of pre-determined fixed motives to

produce new relationships. Internal variations are limited and, more importantly, both the vertical and horizontal occurrences of motives feature no systematic approach other than a principle of free association.

- iv) Finally, the more dominant role of the row in the generation of pitch elements of the piece (see Ex. 48) distinguishes it from both the first and the third.

The stronger influence of the row and the unchanging repetitions of the phrases emphasise the importance attached to pre-compositional elements in the piece. More importantly, because of the freedom with which these elements are continuously stated, the piece captures a quasi-improvisational style in which the improviser constantly varies and reviews the nature of relationships between a fixed stock of melo-rhythmic phrases. The work is also characterised by a highly contrapuntal rhythmic character and unstable pulse (see Ex. 49). In addition, a look at some of the motives such as I, J, O, P (see Ex. 48) shows that they each consist of components of a different character. These components are contrasted through differences in accentuations and registral positions. Again, like The Wanderer, this feature tends to result in a multi-textural organisation - the piano functioning like a surrogate orchestra of contrasting rhythmic patterns (Ex. 50).

As a closing cadential procedure, Euba reduces the tempo of rhythmic activity in bars 57 ff through a three-fold repetition of the material in both the right and left hand with a diminishing dynamic level (Ex. 50). The importance of motive n which ends the piece is foreshadowed in the octave-hammering of its augmented version in bars 40, 42 and 51 (Ex. 51).

In its structure the third piece differs from both the first and second. Its two most distinguishing features are its highly improvisational character and its consistent use of ostinati, formed by phrases x and y of Ex. 52. It is from these ostinato phrases that the piece derives a very strong element of dance. As a corollary to its quasi-improvisational character, sectional divisions are absent. Rather, it realises its form in different cycles of time through frequent use of a referential phrase (Ex. 52c) in the right hand around which other phrases revolve. In addition, the staggered entries of phrases within the bar and the use of rests (Ex. 52) help to evoke those short moments of contemplation during which the improviser deliberates on his next line. The dynamism of the piece derives from the continuous invention of new motivic material while at the same time, through continuous references to such elements as Exx. 52 (x and y) it maintains a link with its preceding bars. The expressive coherence of the piece also derives from the fact that the intervallic properties of phrases present a remarkable unity through which they reveal their relationship with the row. The unity often relies on the regular use of the tritone and the "dominant 7th chord" segment of the row (Ex. 53) in the piece as illustrated in Ex. 52 (a-c). The prevalent use of an invariant chord colour as a unifying element in the piece in the midst of a relatively diversified melo-rhythmic phrases is a reversal of the procedures of the first piece where diversified intervallic elements are used to vary relatively fixed rhythmic phrases.

The stylistic gap between Scenes from Traditional Life and The Wanderer, with regards the use of Nigerian elements, is clearly shown in the discussion above. The conception of rhythmic textures and their formal deployment show a greater Nigerian influence. Even the atonal language of the work, although a twentieth century European approach, does not represent a total break from Yoruba procedures, as will be shown later in the chapter.

It is in Three Yoruba Songs (for baritone, Iya-ilu and piano) that Euba first attempted to use a Yoruba drum to reinforce the Yoruba source of the rhythmic procedures employed in his works. The work makes use of the African-derived rhythmic and formal elements which have been isolated in the piano works examined above. These are polyrhythmic textures, unstable metric pulse, and the principle of continuous variation. The most significant feature of the work, however, is the continuous tension between the inflectionary modal element of the vocal line, the prevailingly atonal structure of the piano and the tonally blurred melodies of the Iya-ilu - the Yoruba talking drum. It is on the interaction between these three musical and timbral elements in the work that the discussion below focuses.<sup>(1)</sup>

The first song, Agbe, is based on the text of a popular Yoruba dirge of the same title (see Ex. 54 for translation of the text). Although the piece is marked by a generally steady and stable character in the use of regular ostinati, it is typified by occasional outbursts, notably through the use of sporadic punctuating phrases provided by the piano. In its opening paragraph (bars 1 - 13) the piano part consists of chord patterns (Ex. 55) which make free use of virtually all the twelve chromatic pitches. Two particular intervals, the perfect fourth and the augmented fourth, both of which are featured in these opening bars, are structurally significant to the piece. This is because the total texture of the piece is framed by the continuous juxtapositions of the two intervals as can be observed in bars 14 ff. Sharply contrasting with the chromatic character of the piano part is the modal identity of the vocal part. As Ex. 55 shows - the vocal line often remains within a heptatonic scale within which the note D functions as a repose.

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(1) The impact of the linguistic features of text on the stylistic character of the work will be examined in Chapter 9.

Through the use of changes in texture, the piece is divided into different sections. Changes of texture also help to reflect the dramatic content of the song. For example, the change from the chordal patterns of the opening bars to the punctuating material of bars 14-26 helps to emphasise an agitated element of the dirge. While cyclic rhythmic figurations (the most notable of which is the pulsating patterns of bars 27-39) tend to initiate the solemn, ritual use of the gong during traditional Yoruba funeral rites, occasional punctuating chords, e.g. of bars 22-26, evoke the element of sporadic emotional outbursts which accompany such rites.

The return of the introduction in bars 55-61, as a postlude to the song, gives the piece a closed form, but within which there is a continuous process of variation, notably in the continuous changes of texture and varied uses of the two prevalent intervals - the perfect fourth and the augmented fourth. The use of the same material in the outer sections of the piano part is a kind of antithesis to the atonal element of the work, since a particular chordal structure (Ex. 55 x) becomes an important referential sonority. The return of this chordal structure (see bars 55-61) parallels the establishment of D as a note of repose in the vocal line of bars 53-55.

The melodic patterns of the Iya-ilu maintain parallel links with the use of the piano changing from the patterns of bars 1-13 to the more punctuating phrases of bars 14-26. The staggered entries of these punctuating phrases (Exx. 55 and 56), supplement the declamatory role of the piano. This role is intensified in bars 27-39 (Ex. 56) where it emphasises the cross-rhythmic character of the passage. The use of glides and rhythmic elaboration of a single melodic pitch in the Iya-ilu line (Ex. 56) has been initiated by the piano in the opening bars (see Ex. 55

Segment Y) and represents one of the hallmarks of the declamatory roles of the Iya-ilu. Towards the end of the song, in bars 43-44, the Iya-ilu provides corresponding, agitated phrases with those of the piano by returning to the wide leaps of bars 15-17.

In EIYE META the atonal procedures of the piano part rely on continuously varied treatments of a thematic idea. As Ex. 57 (a-d) shows, different versions of this idea have the same melodic contour but different intervallic features. Intervals are altered continuously within the general contour of Ex. 57a.

The division of the piece into different sections is carried out through the use of changes in intervallic features as well as texture. Thus in the first section (bars 1-20), Ex. 57 is stated in unison while in the extensive middle section, bars 21-42, the texture becomes relatively contrapuntal. In bars 21-28, for example, new motivic material which is derived from Ex. 57 is used in a quasi-stretto manner (Ex. 58). Although absent in the first section, transient tonal areas (e.g. D<sup>b</sup> (21-22), C (23-24) and B<sup>b</sup> (27-28)) exist here. These areas help to reinforce the tonal orientation of the vocal line in bars 21-28. Apart from such bars, there are few instances where the vocal line and the piano part share the same tonal correlation - a major feature of the stratified texture of the piece. In the last paragraph of the middle section, bars 38-42, the piano changes once more to a new texture - an agitated passage which is characterised by the interval of the tritone. This passage represents the culmination of the rising tension in the work. The last section, bars 43 ff, is a repetition of the opening.

The ternary structure inherent in the piano part is a direct reflection of the poetic structure of the vocal text which centres on three important tropical birds - Agbe, Aluko and Etu. While the opening section

(bars 8-14) introduces the names of these birds the middle section goes on to describe their characteristic features (see translation on p. 68<sup>(1)</sup>). The last section, bars 48-52, repeats the first section.

It is this ternary structure which provides the criteria for the organisation of the Iya-ilu part. The Iya-ilu is given a four bar introduction which consists of two main speech tone phrases each of which introduces two important thematic as well as textual elements of the piece. Ex. 59 y is an anticipation of a vocal line which appears in bars 26-27 (Ex. 60 y), while Ex. 59 x anticipates another vocal line which appears in bars 39-40 (Ex. 60 x). The relationship between the Iya-ilu phrases and the vocal lines often exists in the similarity of contour. When Iya-ilu's phrases do not maintain exactly the same contour relationship with those of the voice (e.g. between Ex. 59 y and 60 y) it is because the Iya-ilu pattern reflects perfectly the contour movement of the text - an obligation which, for reasons to be discussed in Chapter 9, the vocal line does not always fulfill. Apart from the reiteration and variation of important motivic elements in the piece (as Exx. 59 and 60 illustrate) other main functions of the Iya-ilu are: i) the creation of occasional rhythmic pulses which contribute to the highly stratified texture of the piece, and ii) the provision of punctuating, rhythmically irregular phrases to supplement the role of the piano as illustrated in bars 37-41. In itself the alternation between these punctuating passages and occasional regular rhythmic pulses (as in bars 8-11) serves to create and resolve tension in the Iya-ilu part. This, in addition to the juxtaposition of modal-tonal lines and chromatic-atonal textures, highlights the different levels of tension and resolution in the song.

The tension between atonally conceived pitch elements and the modal-inflectionary quality of Yoruba traditional vocal music is most

elaborately illustrated in the third and longest song, Nigbati mo gbo rohin egan. While the vocal part is entirely conceived in a heptatonic mode whose note of repose is D, the piano maintains a generally atonal texture although, like the second piece, residual tonality still exists principally in the appearances of the same ostinato materials (Ex. 61 a) in the outer sections of the work.

As in the other two songs, the ternary conception of the work is a direct reflection of the structure of the vocal text as can be observed in the translation on p. 69<sup>(1)</sup>. The most striking intervallic feature of the piano part in the first section (bars 1-44) is the interchanging use of the intervals of the perfect fourth and the augmented fourth as shown in Ex. 61 (a and b). In this section, the piano part functions strongly as a rhythmic accompaniment to the vocal part through the prevalent use of an ostinato pattern Ex. 61. In the middle section, bars 61-74, where the ostinati materials of the opening section are abandoned, the piano changes to more declamatory, punctuating material (Ex. 62). The declamatory character of the piano in this section - which also relies on the use of different ranges of the instrument, metric changes as well as the use of rests - is an attempt to re-enact the traditional performance context of the text of bars 61-74. Here, the vocal text of these bars (see p. 69 for translation)<sup>(2)</sup> is made up of eulogising imagery and proverbs of the type that, in a traditional setting, a singer might break into, usually in a singing-speaking voice. At that stage, accompanying instruments stop playing with the exception of a gong which continues to provide occasional punctuations. As in the other two songs, it is the ternary scheme of the song which determines the use of the Iya-ilu. In bars 1-60, like the piano, it provides ostinato phrases which, apart from occasional deviations (for example in bars 20-25), continues throughout the first section. The middle section is characterised by a stretto-like imitation of the vocal

1. Second volume

2. Second volume.



lines by the Iya-ilu. To illustrate this imitative procedure, which continues throughout bars 61-74, both the vocal phrases and Iya-ilu part of bars 68-69 are shown in Ex. 63. A common feature of these imitations is that the Iya-ilu often provides rhythmic elaboration on important motivic phrases of the vocal line. The return of the ostinato patterns of the opening bars, like those of the piano, in the last section of the work; restores the regular pulse of the song as well as underlining its ternary structure.

All three pieces are characterised by a highly stratified texture which relies on differences in timbre, tonal organisation, melodic character and rhythmic lines. A typical microcosm of the overall texture of the three pieces is shown in Ex. 63, bars 68-70, of the third piece. Here, the individual horizontal lines, which are characterised by staggered entries, possess distinctive melodic patterns. In contrast to the relatively fluid character of the vocal line the piano and the Iya-ilu lines provide different punctuating phrases both of which rhythmically contradict each other. Additional stratification is created in the piano part through the use of register and by two different figurations (scallic and chordal). In each of the three pieces one major cadential procedure occurs, namely the progressive reduction of the density of texture. This feature is most noticeable in the closing bars of each of the three pieces. In the last piece, for example, each of the three main parts withdraws successively from the dialogue; the voice in bar 126, the piano in bar 133 leaving the Iya-ilu alone in the last bar.

The three works show an integration of the use of a traditional instrument with the piano. The function of the Iya-ilu does not, however, differ significantly from its traditional context since the vocal part provides a framework within which it is used. The task of using traditional instruments becomes more difficult if they have to be used not

as accompanying instruments but independently. When that occurs, the composer has to cope with problems such as continuity, and variety in the light of the limited melodic capability of the instruments. We shall examine how Euba copes with this problem in Igi nla so and in Abiku in Chapter 8.

In Igi nla so (for Gudugudu, Kanango, Iya-ilu dundun, Kerikeri and piano) Euba combines two different organisational procedures to produce one of his most radical attempts at integrating traditional Yoruba music and European music. These procedures are European atonality and traditional African "melo-harmonic ethos". In Chapter 3, the point was stressed that in traditional African music the musical significance of instrumental music does not often lie only in their rhythmic conceptions but also in their melodic-harmonic orientations. This is because "tonal and tone shading possibilities constitute both the apparent and non-apparent systems of pitches which make a rhythmic organisation a cultural melodic essence". As a result of the melodic element of traditional African instruments (for example those of the Yoruba such as Dundun drums) "the overall complexity of an orchestra possesses linear and vertical melo-rhythms ... the overall effect (of which) produce the cultural instrumental melo-harmonic ethos".<sup>(1)</sup> In order to see how Euba uses this particular African procedure with European atonality, Igi nla so will be analysed under four headings: i) organisation of pitch; ii) recurrences and variations; iii) rhythmic organisation, and iv) formal features.

#### Organisation of Pitch

The four Yoruba drums used in the work are, in a traditional Yoruba musical context, generally conceived in a hierarchical order. Both the gudugudu and the Kanango, which rarely play more than two pitches, normally

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(1) Nzewi, M. "Melo-rhythmic essence in African instrumental music" Op.cit. p.32.

provide repetitive ostinato patterns as a result of which they may be referred to as secondary instruments. In contrast, the larger Kerikeri is usually able to play at least four pitches while the Iya-ilu, being the largest of the four, can play as many as eight pitches, or even more depending on the ability of the player. In Igi nla so it is given five pitches. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Iya-ilu is usually played by the leader of the ensemble - the master drummer - who plays extensive improvisations to which the Kerikeri player responds with his own, more limited, improvisations. Against the improvisatory line of the Iya-ilu and Kerikeri are the repetitive ostinati of both the gudugudu and Kanango (see Ex. 2, Chapter 3).

In Igi nla so both the iya-ilu and kerikeri are given characteristic parts: a continuously changing and extensive melo-rhythmic line which can be observed in Ex. 64. On the other hand, the gudugudu and the kanango are not given their customary repetitive rhythmic patterns although their repetitive pitch elements contrast with the varied nature of those of the iya-ilu and kerikeri (Ex. 64).

Each of the four drums can play only one tone at a time; consequently, the maximum number of tone levels that can be heard together as a chord is four. The parts of the drums are written in cleffless notation. This is because the pitch elements of these drums vary from one ensemble to another. In other words there are no absolute tuning procedures. What exists are relative tuning procedures. Usually the tone levels of the gudugudu and the kanango are higher than those of the kerikeri and iya-ilu.

The assignment of a limited number of tone levels to each instrument is, as we have pointed out earlier, suggestive of a row system. In addition, as Ex. 64 shows, as a result of their blurred sonorities and the fact that the vertical and horizontal juxtapositions of phrases are

generally not conditioned by any objective to confirm a tonal centre, the overall texture of the drums is not unrelated, in principle, to European atonal procedures.

The use of a random atonal procedure (see Ex. 65) in the piano part of Igi nla so is a deliberate attempt by Euba to provide a parallel dialogue to the quasi-atonal element of the Yoruba drums.

Thus Euba told the writer that "if I am using Yoruba drums together with the piano in a composition the piano will naturally be in an atonal style".<sup>(1)</sup>

### Recurrences and Variations

An important feature of Igi nla so is the rapport between recurrent elements and those which undergo constant variations. This feature, which represents the hallmark of Yoruba rhythmic and formal procedures, constitutes the principal method on which the continuity of dialogue in the piece relies. This interaction occurs in many dimensions:

- i) between the repetitive tone levels of gudugudu and kanango and their continuously changing rhythms (Ex. 64);
- ii) between the repetitive tone levels of kanango and gudugudu and the relatively varied tones of the iya-ilu and kerikeri (Ex. 64), and;
- iii) more significantly is the balance between repetition and variation in the parts of both the Kerikeri and Iya-ilu as illustrated in Ex. 66.

In the piano part, two recurring elements are used as unifying agents within the generally free atonal character of the texture. These are the use of an unvarying intervallic sonority - the augmented 4th, and the use

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(1) This point was expressed during an interview which I conducted with Euba. See the Appendix, p. 339.

of recurring motivic elements.

The considerable focus on the tritone as a unifying element in the work is exemplified in a typical microcosm (Ex. 67, bars 9-12) where there is both a vertical and horizontal interpenetration of the interval. Other intervals which also receive considerable referential focus in the piece are the perfect 4th and its inversion the perfect 5th as can be observed in Ex. 67. As we shall see later, these intervals are carefully designed to structure the work.

Recurring motives are often linked together through contour similarity rather than exact intervallic correspondence - a feature which echoes the registral melodies of the drum section. For example, the relationship between a recurring idea of the work, Ex. 68, and its variants occur mainly in contour as illustrated in Ex. 68. This motif occurs in bar 11, bar 14 (the last three semiquavers, left hand), bar 20 and in a slightly different version, in bar 21 (where it appears as part of a longer motif), and bar 23. This motif does not feature again until the last bar of the piece where it appears in its original form. There is a complementary relationship between this three note motif and another recurring motif, Ex. 69, which first appears in bar 5. After its initial appearance it reappears in a longer and more consistent version in such bars as 14-15, 18 and 24-25. Like Ex. 68, this motif does not appear again until in the last two bars of the work. The non-occurrence of these two motives in bars 26-63 as well as their reappearances in the last two bars are both structural procedures in the piece.

### Rhythmic Organisation

The total texture of the work is characterised by a complex and a highly stratified rhythmic texture. Notable elements of this complexity include cross rhythms, which often results from the staggered entries of

phrases, constant changes in metre, and off-beat phrasing of melodic accents (Ex. 64). One major element on which the rhythmic complexity of the work relies is the use of the hemiola pattern on different levels:

- i) the juxtaposition of both the triple and duple divisions of the beat as in bars 13 and 14;
- ii) the alternations of both the triple and duple motives as in bars 31-32 ( $\begin{smallmatrix} 3 & 2 \\ 4 & 4 \end{smallmatrix}$ );
- iii) the use of asymmetric metres as in bar 24 ( $\begin{smallmatrix} 5 \\ 8 \end{smallmatrix}$ ).

In the use of the rhythmic procedures outlined above, three main types of passages are presented in the piece:

- i) Passages which consist of regular pulse movement within an irregular metric background. Such passages are common in the piece. An instance is in the opening bars, (1-4, Ex. 70). Here, though the metre changes, the quaver remains the dominating unit of movement.
- ii) Passages of irregular pulse structure and irregular metre as in bars 10-12, Ex. 71. Here, in addition to changes in metre, the division of the beat alternates inconsistently between the triplet and two quavers.
- iii) Passages of relatively consistent pulse movement within a consistent metric background. One of the few instances of such a passage occurs in bars 56-59, Ex. 72.

The prevalence of the first two types of passage emphasises the pervadingly complex rhythmic texture of the piece. It also highlights the flexibility and tension inherent in the overall rhythmic flow of the work. The location

of passage iii) above in bars 56-59 is part of a wider rhythmic progression in the piece. Towards the end of the piece, there is a progressive reduction in the vertical density of texture. For example, from bar 52 ff, the four-layered texture of the drums becomes less consistent, reduced only to occasional punctuations of the piano part by the drums. Since the complex rhythmic character of the work derives significantly from its highly stratified texture this progressive reduction in vertical density lends to the piece an overall tendency towards a more relaxed rhythmic character.

### Formal Features

Although the work is characterised by a generally random approach (in its free atonal procedures and generally free motivic process) it possesses a structured identity through the deployment of intervals and motives. We have isolated how the piece uses certain motives in its opening and closing bars to create a quasi-ternary scheme. In addition is the shift of emphasis from the interval of the tritone to the use of unisons in bars 52-59 (also part of the reduction in vertical density) and the focus on the perfect fourth in bars 52-63. That all these features (the cessation of two important recurring motives, the shift of emphasis from the tritone to the perfect fourth and the decrease in vertical density) coincide represents a deliberate attempt to give the work some element of structured identity while still retaining its free, improvisatory character.

CHAPTER EIGHTORCHESTRAL WORKS

There are still few European-type orchestras in Nigeria. In addition to university orchestras, such as the University of Nigeria Orchestral Society and the Ibadan Polytechnic Orchestra, are those run by the Church - the most prominent of which are the Apostolic Faith Orchestras in Ibadan and Lagos. Because symphony orchestras are not the norm in Nigeria, composers often prefer to write works for solo instruments, chamber and choral works which can be more easily performed; and it is not surprising that those orchestral works that are written are normally commissioned.

In this chapter, orchestral works by Akpabot, Uzoigwe, Sowande and Euba will be examined. Like the piano and chamber works discussed in the last chapter, the objective to fuse traditional African elements with European idioms is important to the conception of these works. Such experiments range from those in which African elements dominate to those in which they are used peripherally within a largely European context.

Some of the most direct references to Nigerian traditional music are to be found in the works of Samuel Akpabot. Like the works of Euba and Uzoigwe, examined in the last chapter, Akpabot's orchestral works often make use of formal and structural procedures suggested by traditional African music. Unlike the works of Sowande and Bankole, examined in chapters 6 and 7 respectively, European tonality in Akpabot's works is often used in the most rudimentary form; chords are predominantly diatonic and tonality is often devoid of modulations. The use of this particular harmonic-tonal language constitutes a deliberate attempt to create works in which European features occur peripherally within a predominantly African structural context. However, the use of African



derived thematic and formal elements within a generally static harmonic and tonal context in Akpabot's works does not always work well. Since one of the primary functions of tonality in European music is to generate and resolve tension, the use of static chords and unchanging keys in Akpabot's works often result in monotony. Akpabot realises this and a sample of his works examined below show how he tries to cope with this problem from one work to another. This stylistic exploration progresses from his earliest works, Overture for a Nigerian Ballet, Three Nigerian Dances and Scenes from Nigeria, to his last major work, the Verba Christi in which he uses atonal procedures.

In the orchestral works Akpabot seeks to "capture the idiom of the West African Highlife music". The references to this idiom are often direct and unpretentious. Some of the primary elements of the works, such as diatonic harmonies and ternary form, may be European-derived. European as they are, however, they have become familiar and popular elements of a local musical dialect. We shall briefly examine examples from these orchestral works to illustrate the use of the stylistic features mentioned above.

A general survey of the thematic ideas in these works (see Ex. 1) shows their allegiance to the Highlife, in their diatonic character; and to traditional Ibibio music in their fragmentary nature, in the use of iambic rhythmic patterns (as in Ex. 1a, c, g) and their general tendency of beginning from a high point and descending to a lower note as in Ex. 1 a, c, e and g. In addition, formal procedures in the works generally follow traditional Nigerian procedures. For example, the second of the Three Nigerian Dances makes use of an open ended formal procedure in which its main melody, Ex. 1 g, undergoes a process of continuous variation within a generally unchanging F major tonality. Quite often the fragments derived

from this melody are developed into ostinati phrases as can be observed in bars 10-25 and 26-29. Throughout the work, such ostinati fragments continue to feature against regular tonic-dominant punctuations provided by the cello, double bass and timpani - bars 26-29 for example. This procedure, which is the main developmental procedure of the dance, continues until the end of the piece and the main melody does not return in its original form.

The opening bars of the Overture for a Nigerian Ballet, within which Ex. 1a is presented, also shows strong allegiance to traditional Nigerian procedures. Ex. 1a divides into three parts: phrases A and B are calls while C is a short response. Phrase A is a prelude-call. In traditional Ibibio setting, such a prelude marks the beginning of a musical performance or of a new item within a musical performance and it is usually rendered by a soloist with punctuations from instruments.<sup>(1)</sup> This traditional setting is reflected in the opening bars, 1-29, of the Overture for a Nigerian Ballet. The use of chordal punctuations (bars 2-3, 9-10) and rhythmic interludes (bars 4-6) after each of the two appearances of phrase A represents a direct re-enactment of the traditional Ibibio setting of Ex. 1a. The entire texture of the overture is, like most of Akpabot's orchestral works, permeated by the use of ostinati and parallel harmonies. In addition, the work presents a rhapsodic form within which thematic ideas (Ex. 1a-c) are strung together rather loosely.

In all the works, harmonic progressions are generally simple and diatonic, making use of only very few modulations. In the Pastorelle, Highlife and Blues of Scenes from Nigeria, for example, there is no change of key. When there are changes of key, as in the Overture for a Nigerian Ballet, they are merely juxtaposed since connective modulatory passages

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(1) For a discussion of this and other Ibibio musical features, see Akpabot, S.E. Op. cit.

are generally absent. The formal and harmonic simplicity of these works is consistent with the composer's desire to court relatively wide appeal through the use of idioms from Highlife music - the most popular genre in Nigeria in the early 60's when the works were composed.

Akpabot's next orchestral work, the award winning OFALA FESTIVAL (for wind orchestra and percussion) retains all the main stylistic features of the earlier orchestral works. These are the use of Highlife cum Ibibio-derived melo-rhythms and diatonic themes, the use of an unchanging tonality and the conception of melodic phrases in call and response patterns (Ex. 3). Two features, however, differentiate the work from the earlier orchestral dances. These are the use of traditional Nigerian instruments and the employment of a formal outline which is directly suggested by the different stages of the Festival (the Ofala) which the work illustrates.

The Nigerian percussion instruments used in the work are the Ogene (twin-gong), Sekere (rattle), Obodom (wooden drum) and tom-tom. In addition, Western instruments in the work are chosen to resemble, as closely as possible, their traditional Nigerian counterparts: Western horns to imitate Ibibio elephant tusk horns, Western flutes to imitate the Igbo five-stop flute (Oja) and Western trumpets to imitate Ibibio valveless trumpets.

The festival on which the work is a tone poem is known as OFALA.<sup>(1)</sup> It is held annually in Onitsha (Anambria State) during which the Igwe (King) comes from his palace to give an account of his stewardship to his people. According to the composer "On the first day he (the Igwe) emerges a few yards from his palace and then returns home, while on the second day he walks as far as the gates of the palace and returns. On the third day

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(1) This Festival is held during the harvest season of each year.

he walks right out of his palace into the town to meet his subjects amidst scenes of great jubilation and dancing." It is on this third day that the rituals and the ceremonies of the Festival take place. Fig. I shows the correspondence between different sections of the work and the different stages of the Festival.

The first section consists of a percussive-polyrhythmic introduction which is gradually built into a multi-layered texture (Ex. 2). The principal theme of the work, Ex. 3a, appears in bar 11. It is syncopated, diatonic and conceived in a call and response pattern. In the remaining part of the section (bars 11-29) this melody is often broken into small fragments, and sometimes stated in call and response patterns.

In bar 30, Ex. 3 is developed into a fanfare idea, Ex. 3b (accompanied homophonically to depict the arrival of the Igwe to the scene of the Festival), while in bar 44 ff it is developed into a wedge-like melody, Ex. 4. This section represents the part of the Festival when sacrifices are offered to the gods. The joining of the crowd in the rituals is represented by the vocal part of bars 64-71, 80-87 which brings back the homophonic texture of bars 30-43. The return of the fanfare theme in bars 121-143 marks the King's majestic departure from the scene of the Festival. Its presentation here is more grandiose than that of bars 30-43. When the rhythmic prelude returns, now as a postlude, it is reduced to a 10-bar paragraph.

The use of programme in this work is not unrelated to traditional formal procedures in which a musical performance often derives its form from extra-musical, social and religious, contexts.

FIGURE ITHE OFALA : OUTLINE OF FORM

Main Section	Bars	Key	Sub Sections	Programmatic Connection
Exposition ↓	1-10	B <sup>b</sup> ↓	Rhythmic prelude (Ex.2)	} Pre-festival } entertainment
	11-29		Presentation of 1st theme (Ex. 3a)	
	30-43		2nd theme (variant of Ex. 3a- Ex. 3b) (Fanfare Section)	Arrival of Royalty
Develop- ment ↓	44-87	↓	1st development a) wedge-like theme b) vocal melody (both variant of 1st theme)	Ritual ceremony
	88-99		Bridge passage	Post-ritual entertainment
	100-118	F ↓	2nd development consisting mainly of Ex. 5.	
	119-120	↓	Bridge passage	
Recap- itulation ↓	121-133	B <sup>b</sup> ↓	2nd theme (Fanfare Section)	Departure of Royalty
	133-143		Rhythmic postlude	Post- Festival entertainment

In his next orchestral work, Cynthia's Lament, the lack of tonality-generated tension is compensated for by the use of a vocal line which has its own built in agitation. The structural outline of the work, which is scored for soprano solo, wind orchestra and percussion, is ternary:

FIGURE II

OUTLINE OF FORM : CYNTHIA'S LAMENT

Sections	Keys	Themes	Bars	Tempo
Exposition: ↓ short link	A minor	a	1-41	Grave
	A major	b	37-41 42-57	Tempo Giusto
Development ↓ link to recapitulation	A major	a & b	58-99 (65 ff)	Animato Andante con moto
	C	a & b	90-99	
Recapitulation short link	C	b	100-107 108-111	Calando
	A minor (A major)	a	111-130	Andante con moto

The first segment of the exposition, bars 1-41, is characterised by fragmentary, angular and declamative vocal phrases (typified by constant changes of dynamics) set to the words Ewo and Waiyo (Ex. 6). These two Igbo words are customarily used to express feelings of anger, shock and disappointment. It is mainly through the repetitions of these words, and the emotive, fragmentary and angular lines to which they are set, that the piece presents the dramatic content of its background programme - the lamentation of Cynthia.<sup>(1)</sup> The second segment of the exposition presents a new contrasting (Igbo) melodic idea within a dance-like polyrhythmic texture, Ex. 7. As in Akpabot's previous works examined above, the development lacks any substantial key changes and it is defined mainly through the use of motivic fragments derived from the two main ideas of the piece to create polyrhythmic textures (Ex. 8). Apart from the occasional use of chromatic paragraphs (e.g. bars 23-26) to enhance the agitation of the voice, the piece remains predominantly diatonic.

In Nigeria in Conflict, another tone poem, this time concerned with the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-1970, the unexplorative tonal and harmonic language of his previous works is abandoned for a relatively more dynamic organisation. Unlike Ofala Festival the different sections of the work (see Fig. III) are not intended as paintings of specific extra-musical procedures. Apart from its often violent character, references to the Civil War exist in the setting of traditional tunes from the Eastern part of the country (the Secessionist Camp) (Ex. 9b) against a fragment of the (then) Nigerian National Anthem (Ex. 9a). Like Ofala Festival and Cynthia's Lament, the work makes use of a wind orchestra and a percussion section which includes Nigerian instruments (see Ex. 10).

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(1) See Chapter 5, p. 139.

FIGURE IIINIGERIA IN CONFLICT : OUTLINE OF FORM

Bars	Section	Tonality
1-16	Introduction	F
17-30	Rhythmic prelude	F
31-48	Sparse quasi-pointillistic	Chromatic
49-70	Poly-rhythmic ostinati	E <sup>b</sup>
71-79	Poly-rhythmic ostinati	Chromatic
80-83	Short link	E <sup>b</sup>
84-107	Original theme (Ex. 9a) and its variant Ex.9c	E <sup>b</sup> main theme
108-116	Ostinato/poly-rhythmic	A <sup>b</sup>
117-144	Fanfare passage	F
(138-144	- bridge passage)	
145-172	Poly-rhythmic = Tutti (finally, homophonic, rhythmic)	F



As Ex. 10 shows, the first section of the work, which consists of a fanfare introduction (bars 1-16), presents a rhythmic prelude (bars 17-30) highlights of which are:

A recurring melo-rhythmic phrase, accompanied by, a repetitive motif in perfect fourths, both played by the xylophone. These two elements are repeated as ostinati above the polyrhythmic accompaniment provided by the remaining percussion instruments (Ex. 10). In bar 31 this poly-rhythmic texture dissipates into a sparse chromatic texture where notes are presented in a hocket procedure, reminiscent of traditional Ibibio procedures (Ex. 11). These opening bars thus present two levels of progression which recur in the work:

- i) the alternation between diatonic and chromatic passages, and
- ii) the alternation between melo-rhythmic ostinati and quasi-pointillistic material.

In addition, the whole of bars 1-76 possesses a progressively agitated character in which there is a general increase in tempo.

It is not until bar 84 that the main theme of the piece (Ex. 9), an Igbo melody appears. After its first appearance (bars 82-92, Ex. 9b) it is developed into a longer version (Ex. 9c) in bars 93-108 where it is harmonised in parallel chords and accompanied by motivic fragments derived from itself. Between now and the end of the work, four main events take place:

- i) The piece progresses to the key of  $A^b$  - the second major modulation in the piece (see Fig. III).
- ii) There is an alternation between passages which do not, and those which consist of polyrhythmic ostinati (see Fig. III). Thus there is:

- iii) A digression to a homophonic fanfare passage in bars 117-144; and;
- iv) A recall of the polyrhythmic texture of the opening bars (Ex. 10).

All these features highlight the more dynamic character of the work when compared with Ofala Festival and Cynthia's Lament. As Fig. III shows, the thematic-structural outline of the piece presents a pattern in which the first section consists of a gradual development towards the theme. The allegiance of such a formal procedure to Nigerian traditional music has been explained in Chapter 6.<sup>(1)</sup>

Considering their formal procedures, their melodic features and their harmonic patterns, it can be said that African elements dominate in the stylistic conception of Akpabot's works examined above. European harmony and tonality are used in their most restrictive forms, while formal, melodic and rhythmic features often conform to traditional Nigerian patterns especially in the use of melo-rhythms, lack of key changes, poly-rhythms, ostinati and rhapsodic-improvisatory structures.

The radical stylistic departure noticeable in Akpabot's next major work, the Verba Christi, a cantata for orchestra, soloists and chorus, is striking. This departure exists principally in the abandonment of Highlife-Ibibio derived melodies, the abandonment of traditional Nigerian instruments and the use of atonality. However, although the work is conceived along the lines of a European baroque cantata and although the rhetoric references to traditional Nigerian music are lacking, Verba Christi still bears the influence of African music.

An important feature of the work is its use of a variety of organisational procedures consisting of atonal, tonal and modal passages. The varied types of pitch structure in the work is justifiable for one important reason. Considering its length and its dramatic association (as

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(1) See p. 159

a cantata), the static tonality of a work like Ofala Festival would be inadequate to sustain long term dialogue. In addition, although atonality occupies an important place in the work, Akpabot realises the fact that many Nigerian listeners of classical music have developed their taste through (tonal) church hymns. Thus, tonal sections are introduced. In itself the alternation between atonal and tonal sections in the work (see Fig. IV, pp. 231-232) provides one of the principal means of achieving tension and relaxation.

As Fig. IV shows, the Cantata falls into four divisions: the introduction and overture, Christ's entry into Jerusalem, the raising of Lazarus, and the Passover and Transfiguration. The libretto of the work, written by the composer, is based on the synoptic Gospels. The work lacks the dramatic realism of Bach's Passions, although it uses many of the devices found in Bach's works. Akpabot's work is much shorter and avoids a detailed presentation of events. It is a reinterpretation rather than a re-presentation of the Passion story. In its meditative character, it is similar to Stainer's Crucifixion, a work which is extremely popular in Nigerian churches and one with which Akpabot is familiar. As in Bach's Passions, the narrator, a tenor, performs the traditional role of the Evangelist, while Jesus is assigned to a bass solo voice. The only other soloist is Martha, a soprano. Arias, including ariosos, do not usually follow the da capo form, while recitatives are generally in the accompagnato style. The chorales in Verba Christi (see Ex. 12) lack the expressive chromatic qualities of those of Bach's Passions but seek to perform a similar function - to enable congregational participation in the unfolding story.

The combination of tonal and atonal procedures in the work can be observed in a summary provided in Fig. IV. The harmonic procedures in the

FIGURE IVCANTATA : VERBA CHRISTI: OUTLINE OF FORM

NOS.	PAGES	GENRE	CHARACTER- ISATION	TEXT	PITCH STRUCTURE
<u>SECTION A : INTRODUCTION AND OVERTURE</u>					
1	1-2	RECITATIVE	NARRATOR	IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD	ATONAL
2	3-5	RECITATIVE	CHRIST	VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU	B <sup>b</sup> MINOR
3	6	CHORALE	CHOIR	LORD THY WORD ABIDETH	F
4	7-9	OVERTURE	PASSACAGLIA	ORCHESTRA	ATONAL
<u>SECTION B : ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM</u>					
5	10	RECITATIVE	NARRATOR	FIVE DAYS BEFORE THE PASSOVER	G
6	11-17	CHORUS		HOSSANAH IN THE HIGHEST	G-D
7	18-19	CHORUS	PHARISEES	PERCEIVE HOW WE PREVAIL NOTHING	ATONAL
8	20	RECITATIVE	CHRIST	IF THESE PEOPLE SHOULD HOLD THEIR PEACE	ATONAL
9	21-25	ARIA	CHRIST	DAUGHTERS OF ZION	C MINOR
10	26	CHORALE		SOLDIERS OF CHRIST ARISE	C MAJOR
<u>SECTION C : THE RAISING OF LAZARUS</u>					
11	27	RECITATIVE	NARRATOR	CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES DEPARTED INTO JUDEA	A MINOR - F
12	28-29	RECITATIVE	MARTHA	LORD IF THOU HAST BEEN HERE MY BROTHER WOULD NOT HAVE DIED	ATONAL
13	30-31	RECITATIVE	CHRIST	I AM THE RESSURECTION AND THE LIFE	F MINOR
14	32-33	SOLILOQUI	MARTHA	WE BELIEVE THAT THOU ART CHRIST	G (MODAL)

FIGURE IV (Cont.)

NOS.	PAGES	GENRE	CHARACTER- ISATION	TEXT	PITCH STRUCTURE
		<u>SECTION C (CONT.)</u>			
15	34-39	ORCHESTRA		LAMENT	B <sup>b</sup>
16	40	RECITATIVE	NARRATOR	CHRIST WAS LED TO THE TOMB	C MINOR
17	41	ARIOSO	CHRIST	FATHER I THANK THEE	B MINOR
18	42-44	RECITATIVE	CHRIST	LAZARUS .. LAZARUS	VAGUE
19	45	CHORALE	CHOIR	HARK MY SOUL	E <sup>b</sup>
		<u>SECTION D : THE PASSOVER AND TRANSFIGURATION</u>			
20	46	RECITATIVE	NARRATOR	NOW WAS THE TIME FOR THE PASSOVER	C MINOR
21	47-49	RECITATIVE	CHRIST	VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU	C MINOR E <sup>b</sup>
22	50-51	CHORUS	DISCIPLES	IS IT I LORD?	VAGUE
23	52	RECITATIVE	NARRATOR	AND AS THEY ATE	A MINOR
24	53-56	ARIOSO	CHRIST	TAKE THIS BREAD	A MINOR
25	57	CHORALE	CHOIR	WE LOVE THY PLACE O LORD	A MINOR
26	58	SINFONIA - MOUNT OF OLIVES	ORCHESTRA		ATONAL
27	59-60	ARIA	CHRIST	ABBA FATHER	B MINOR
28	61-70	CHORUS	CHOIR	THERE IS A MESSAGE FROM THE LORD	B <sup>b</sup> (MAJOR)

tonal passages are akin to those already identified in such works as Ofala Festival and Overture for a Nigerian Ballet in their generally unexplorative nature. Not surprisingly (considering the undynamic nature of tonal passages) it is in the atonal sections that we find the more effective means of using music to enhance the dramatic idea of the libretto. In addition, the use of rhythmic and motivic procedures akin to traditional African patterns in such atonal sections often result in a rather unconventional use of the 12-tone row. Rather than undertaking a detailed analysis of the work, we shall briefly examine some of its sections to illustrate the main features of its atonal language.

The row on which the atonal sections of the work are based is characterised by distinct motivic and intervallic features (Ex. 13). The recurrences of these motivic elements in different sections of the work constitute a principal unifying procedure. Prominent motivic features of the row are marked x, x1 and y (Ex. 13) while the most prominent intervals are the semitone and the perfect fifth. The prominence of these motivic and intervallic patterns can be observed in the opening bars of the passacaglia (p. 7). Here, bars 1-16 (Ex. 14), motif x is articulated through its distribution among different instruments (bars 1-8) - a procedure which evokes the use of the hocket technique in traditional African music. Here too (especially in bars 9-16) the prominence of semitonal descents is striking, while the row is presented in its original form by the cello and the double bass, the violins and violas present emotive semitonal fragments which seem to evoke the Passion associated with the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

The opening bars of the work (the recitative), where the row is used in its original form also illustrate Akpabot's use of music to paint the dramatic nature of text. The symbolic declaration: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God": is given a heightened dramatic

significance by its musical setting through increasingly loud dynamics with graded climaxes on the words Word (bar 3), God (bar 5) and Word (bar 7) (Ex. 15). These two words are set to the two highest pitches in the music coinciding with the orchestral punctuations in bars 3 and 5. The rising dynamic level is matched by a corresponding rise in melodic contour with both elements producing a climax in bar 5. The orchestral postlude in bars 7-11 prolongs the dramatic discussion moving away from its initial, mainly supportive role, to forceful chordal punctuations with agitated reinforcement from the timpani.

Since atonal passages in the work are often characterised by poly-rhythmic textures and ostinati, a deliberate device by the composer to imitate African instrumental procedures, the 12 notes of the row do not often appear intact. This is illustrated in the chorus of the Pharisees (pp. 18 and 19) where the use of a multi-layered rhythmic texture typified by often loud dynamic markings (Ex. 16) give the hostility of the Pharisees a dramatic exclamation. In addition to their rhythmic character, the limited ambit of melodic lines given to instruments in Ex. 16 underlines Akpabot's use of a European orchestral to imitate the melo-rhythmic textures of African music. We only need to compare Ex. 16 with the parts given to traditional Ibiblio instruments in Nigeria in Conflict (Ex. 10) to see a similar use of European and African instruments.


Despite its largely European conception the Verba Christi has been well received by Nigerian audiences. In 1979 and 1981, when the work was presented at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, there was much acclaim. The major reason for this is that the work, as a cantata, tells a religious story which is part of the Nigerian experience. The association of music with extra-musical events is (as mentioned in Chapter 3), crucial to traditional Nigerian musical culture. There is an

important point to be made here, since it touches on a fundamental issue in considering how a modern Nigerian composer of classical music can continue to maintain strong links with traditional musical practices. The evocation of the multi-media element of traditional Nigerian music could prove to be the most adequate means of achieving this if the warm reception of Verba Christi and other works such as Bankole's Festac Cantata and Ndubuisi's opera The Vengeance of Lizards (see Chapter 11) are anything to go by. We shall be returning to this point later in the thesis.

The use of a European orchestra to evoke the textures of African music as we have seen in the works of Akpabot is also germane to the conception of Uzoigwe's major orchestral work, Watermaid (for voice solo and orchestra). Written in 1982, the work makes use of a poem, Watermaid, in the vocal part. This poem is one of five under the title Heavensgate written by Christopher Okigbo who was one of Nigeria's leading poets of the 1960's. Uzoigwe's Watermaid consists of four short movements corresponding to the four verses of the poem. A striking feature of the work is the percussive use of the orchestra. The work is pervaded by the use of melo-rhythmic ostinati and a regular polyrhythmic texture. Frequently, harmonies are incidental-vertical results of independent lines rather than harmonies vertically conceived. Thus, as a result of its undisguised evocation of the poly- and melo-rhythmic texture of African music, the work possesses a language in which contrapuntal phrases dictate, rather than derive from, the harmonic patterns. This, in addition to the use of chromaticism, often result in unclarified tonal areas. When tonal areas are clarified, it is either through pedals or through ostinati reiterations of unchanging harmonic areas recalling similar procedures in his earlier piano works such as the Four Nigerian Dances. In its heterophonic procedures, therefore, the work evokes the harmonic features of traditional African music. The discussion below does not aim at a



detailed examination of the work but focuses on illustrating the use of its stylistic features.

The use of ostinati is exemplified in the opening bars of the first movement where a quaver motif played by the flutes and the celeste is set against the  rhythm of the timpani and (with slight variations), of the cello and double bass. The violins and the violas provide sustained chords. Although virtually most of the pitch elements of the first paragraph (bars 1-15) belong to the key of C minor, it is not until the second paragraph, in bars 16-19, (Ex. 17) that the key is properly established through a C pedal. The whole of the first movement is framed by a juxtaposition of these two types of passages: those where ostinati, polyrhythmic material lack a strong tonal focus and those where the background C minor of the work is clearly established through pedals.

The second movement features a more diversified structure. In its opening (bars 65-80) an important intervallic element of the opening of the first movement is recalled, the dissonant major seconds (bar 1 ff, first movement) are, in the second movement, reduced to minor seconds which reiterate a rhythmic motif of the gong rhythm (Ex. 18). In the second paragraph, bars 80-94, the piece features a more stratified texture (Ex. 19). A prominent rhythmic strand here is in the oboe part. It evokes the melo-rhythms characteristic of Igbo traditional flute, the Oja in its restrictive melodic ambit and percussive character. The increasingly rhythmic activity presented between the first two paragraphs points to the structural importance of rhythm in the movement. In its rhythmic design the movement divides into two main sections - bars 67-129 and 130-185. Between bars 67-129 the first section presents a continuously polarised texture and an unstable rhythmic character which is resolved in the stretto passage of bars 127-129 (Ex. 20). The second section returns to the active rhythmic

texture of the first and it is not until the final bars (181-185) that this is relieved by a relatively homogeneous texture. This resolution is enhanced through the use of an extremely quiet dynamic marking (PPP).

The B tonality of the movement is often established not as a key but as a chordal area. This is because the chords within which the note B is often featured do not reflect either the major or the minor key as can be observed in bars 67-74. Like the first movement, the establishment of B as the tonal goal of the movement generally relies on pedals and repetitions. From the second paragraph (bars 81-94) the movement progresses with a constant evasion of B, the note of repose. This is most clearly brought about by the continuous polarisation earlier referred to and the considerable use of colouristic dissonances in (Ex. 19, bars 80-88). It is not until the stretto passage of bars 127-129 (Ex. 20) that the B tonality is prominently featured again; the note B reappears as a pedal. It is this pedal that articulates the bipartite division of the movement. In the second section of the movement, the B tonality receives greater focus. Apart from the paragraph of bars 143-157, the note B is continuously stated as a pedal virtually throughout the section. Essentially, the second section (bars 130-185) constitutes a re-presentation of prominent features of the first. These features include the flute melody of bars 155-158, a fragment of the stretto material of bars 127-129, clarinets (Ex. 20), the ostinato motivic idea of bars 162-167 (flute) which had appeared in bars 80-92, oboe (Ex. 19), and the dissonant syncopated material (Ex. 18), which brings back the ambivalent chordal structure (Ex. 21) of the opening bars.

The chromatic character of the piece reaches its most advanced stage in the third and shortest movement. Abandoning the pervasive use of ostinati in the first two movements, the third is characterised by angular and densely chromatic phrases, as can be observed in the opening

bars (186 ff). A prominent harmonic procedure of the movement is the use of parallel organum in fourths to provide periodic commentaries on the intensely emotive vocal part (bars 201 ff). The emotive character of the vocal part derives from both its angular and chromatic character.

Unlike the first two movements, the third presents a chromatic character with no major orientation towards a tonal centre.

The atonal character of the third movement is resolved in the fourth which brings back both the melo-rhythms as well as the ostinato-defined tonal character of the first two. The movement begins with a pervadingly stratified texture which resolves into the same stretto passage as the second movement in bars 259-265. After this, and like the second movement, the fourth movement returns to a polyrhythmic texture which continues almost until the final bars. One particular phrase, Ex. 22a, continuously recurs in the movement. Ex. 22a is first presented in the opening, bars 230-234, after which it appears as an interlude between vocal lines. In each of its other appearances (bars 250-252, 280-282) it undergoes subtle rhythmic changes (Ex. 22a-c). Despite the prevalence of heterophonic procedures in Watermaid, vestiges of diatonic-tonal progressions can still be isolated. In bars 257-258 for example, there is a suggestion of a IV-I cadence; bars 285-286 indicate a V7-I progression in C major; and in the last three bars of the work a unison of V-I in D minor is clearly presented.

The use of Nigerian and Nigerian-derived melodies and melo-rhythms; the evocation of African rhythmic textures as well as the use of Nigerian

inspired heterophonic, modally inflected, harmonies in Sowande's orchestral works follow a different procedure from those of Uzoigwe and Akpabot. One feature of Sowande's orchestral works, and it is a feature which stylistically separates them from his other instrumental works - mainly those for the organ, is their successful integration of African-inspired rhythmic procedures with conventional European tonality. Unlike those of Akpabot, tonality in Sowande's works is used in a very dynamic manner. The African Suite and Folk Symphony, Sowande's two most popular orchestral works, clearly illustrate these stylistic features.

The African Suite (for strings orchestra) is in five movements: Joyful day (based on a melody by Ephrain Amu - a Ghanaian composer), Nostalgia (a personal statement by the composer about "his home and family), Lullaby (based on a Nigerian melody), Onipe (based on another melody by Amu) and Akinla (a highlife tune popular in Nigeria). The work expresses contrasting moods: the rhythmic vitality of the first movement, the pastoral character of the second and the Highlife vigour of the fifth. In a review of the work, Cohn states that despite Sowande's desire to "illustrate the unification of African and European music, the work is not African though styled with good taste".<sup>(1)</sup> Despite Cohn's observation, it must be stated that the work makes a considerable use of African developments notably in its rhythmic vigour, its melo-rhythms, ostinati, poly-rhythms and heterophonic harmonic procedures. The constant references to dance-like polyrhythmic passages is linked to the circumstances surrounding its conception. As mentioned in Chapter 5, it was written and first performed as part of a lecture series broadcast on the BBC World Service for African listeners. In order to make the music approachable there was the need to make constant references to elements with which they were familiar. Since it is in the first and longest movement of the work that such elements are most prominently used, the analysis below focuses on it.

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(1) Cohn, A. Recorded Classical Music, Schirmer Books, 1981, p.1770.

The formal outline of Joyful day (Fig. V) can be defined as a sonata form which lacks the conventional key relationships and which consists of an extensive coda. The characteristic rhythmic vigour of the movement is seminally presented in each of the main thematic ideas, Exx. 23 and 24. Ex. 23, a Ghanaian tune, consists of a prominent hemiola pattern which pervades the movement. The presentation of this theme in the opening bars is accompanied by two different but related ostinato patterns in the violas, harp and cellos; with the double bass, and a section of the cellos, providing harmonic direction. Ex. 23, characterised by two-bar phrasing and a hemiola pattern, is in two strophes, bars 3-16 and 17-26. Throughout the exposition this melody is often accompanied by the ostinato patterns referred to above. The only exceptions are in such bars as 11-16 where, as a result of the impending cadence in bars 15-17, both the harp and the violas deviate into a more melodic line while the cellos rest. The same deviations occur in bar 23 ff as an anticipation of the end of the second strophe in bar 26. This initial use of ostinatos and their sensitivity to cadential points is a constant feature of the movement.

The second theme, Ex. 24, is modal and has an equally rhythmic character. It appears in bar 68 ff (second violins) within an accompanimental texture which acknowledges its African character: the pizzicato organum of the cello and the hemiola patterns of the violas.

It is, however, in the development that the close connection between harmonic progression and rhythmic movement is most intensified. As discussed in Chapter 3 the vertical combination of melo-rhythms with different melodic and rhythmic inclinations often results in complex harmonic relationships which, though they may be incidental, are one of the important bases of traditional African polyphony. Sowande is aware of this and it is through its exploitation that harmonic interest is often created. In addition, through the use of this heterophonic procedure,

FIGURE VAFRICAN SUITE - JOYFUL DAY : OUTLINE OF FORM

SECTIONS	BARS	MAIN TONAL AREAS
EXPOSITION:		
1st thematic area (Ex. 23)	1-60	F
Link passage	61-68	C
2nd thematic area (Ex. 24)	69-95	G <sup>m</sup> (1)
Link passage	96-101	D
DEVELOPMENT:		
Section A	102-148	D <sup>m</sup>
Section B	149-189	A
Section C	190-206	E
Section D	207-248	D <sup>b</sup>
RECAPITULATION:		
1st thematic area	249-299	F
Transition	299-332	C
2nd thematic area	332-350	C <sup>m</sup>
Coda:	351-428	C
1st theme	429-470	F

(1) The letter m following the key suggests a strong modal quality to that particular section.

sectional tonal areas are often quitted or overshadowed without recourse to conventional modulatory processes. The discussion which follows looks at the development section under its main tonal area: bars 102-148, 149-206 and 207-248 (see Fig. V).

Bars 102-148: In bar 117, the D major tonality which the link passage of bars 96-101 has initiated (see Fig. V) is overshadowed when three layers of ostinato patterns appear (Ex. 25). These are: (a) the ostinato pattern played by the second violins and the harp - it is derived from the second theme, Ex. 24; (b) the ostinato pattern played by the cellos, violas and violins - also derived from Ex. 24; and (c) the patterns played by a section of the first violins, which had appeared in bars 56-59 (violas). The dance-like character of the section is intensified in bars 132-148 when another set of rhythmic ostinatos appear. As can be observed in Ex. 26 this new set is a variant of Ex. 25. As a result of the syncopated rhythmic character of the passage, and since the ostinato materials used in it have different melodic and rhythmic inclinations, the A major tonality of the section is continuously relegated to the background.

Bars 149-206: the two key areas here are being treated together not only because they are thematically related, but also because the E major section is a relatively short one compared with the other tonal regions of the development (Fig. V). Generally, this section has a less marked rhythmic character compared with the previous one. Slightly new material (Ex. 27) appears in bar 176 - a lyrical melody developed from Ex. 23. The initial A major is quitted through a fairly chromatic transition (183 ff) which leads to E major in bar 190. It is interesting to see how the syncopated melo-rhythm (of the cellos and double basses) is brought back to punctuate these modulatory bars. The E major section (bars 190-206) recapitulates the material of the A major section leading to the D<sup>b</sup> section.

Bars 207-248: the key of D<sup>b</sup> of this section is a large scale jolt to the preceding cycle of fifths (see Fig. V). Consequently, this section constitutes a climax within the development. The effectiveness of this climax is enhanced by the dramatic use of syncopated melorhythms and ostinati combined polyrhythmically. Like the first section of the development (bars 102-148) the initially diatonic D flat character of this section soon digresses, in bar 222, to a heterophonic, modal texture within which D flat is confirmed solely through pedals. The fragmented line of the violins, characterised by continuous rhythmic manipulation, can be observed in Ex. 28. The section reaches a desperately furious state in bar 239 through superimposed tritones which resolve to a dominant preparation for the recapitulation in bars 241-248.

The recapitulation (bars 249-470) begins in the same way as the exposition but in bar 351 digresses to a coda - which acts as a second development. One previous deviation had occurred earlier foreshadowing this. In bar 292 (after the nota-cambiata passage) the first theme reappears, but is later abandoned half way, in bar 300. The link passage appears here, bar 301 ff, heralding a new heterophonic passage in bar 306 ff. It is after these deviations that the second theme appears in bar 335 ff (2nd violins). There is good reason for the need for a second development. The most distinctive features of Ex. 24, the second theme, are its syncopated character, its fragmentary nature, and its modal quality - elements which lend themselves to development. In its fragmentary, syncopated and modal character however, this theme is not particularly appropriate as closing material - a structural function which (by virtue of its position in the exposition) it may have had to perform. For this reason the first theme, Ex. 23, more rhythmically stable and more diatonic in character, is preferred as the closing material. Against this background, the main function of the coda is to enhance the effectiveness of



the appearance of Ex. 23. This explains why the coda remains in the dominant key of C major throughout. But even then, it is in the continuation of dynamic, rhythmic and heterophonic procedures that the coda acquires added strength in its structural function. Thus, after the link passage of bars 351-359, Ex. 28, which has appeared before in bars 223 ff, appears within its hocketed rhythmic accompaniment once again in bars 357-364. In bar 365-376 another motif derived from the link passage of bars 60-67 appears (violin I) accompanied by an equally syncopated motif (violin II and cellos) which is brought over from bar 41 ff (cello). The passage bursts into a fortissimo paragraph (bars 377-385) where Sowande ingeniously brings back a variant of the polyrhythms of bars 132-145 (Ex. 26). Following another seven bars of rhythmic display (bar 386-393), and a brief anticipation of the closing theme (394-401), the link passage returns (bar 406 ff). After a terraced presentation of a suspense motif (bars 417-428), the first theme returns with pomp and pageantry as the closing material.

As this discussion has shown, the African Suite presents a successful integration of African-derived rhythmic and heterophonic procedures with European tonality. Tension is continuously created and resolved through the combination of dynamic tonality and rhythmic motion. Thus while using African elements, the work retains a harmonic-tonal language which continually changes.

The Folk Symphony represents the culmination of Sowande's compositional style. As his last major work the symphony constitutes a stylistic summary of features which have appeared in his previous works including the African Suite. Like his early works such as the Oyigiyigi and the African Suite, the work is largely European in conception both in its nineteenth century harmonic language and in its employment of conventional European form: a sonata allegro in the first and last

movements, a (vivace) Scherzo in the second and an (andante) Rondo in the third. Of striking prominence in the work is Sowande's approach to harmonic and tonal organisation. As a result of the proliferation of Yoruba and Yoruba-derived modal melodies, harmonic and tonal progressions are often modally inflected. The most important feature of such modal passages is the use of familiar chord structures within unconventional harmonic context recalling Slomninsky's concept of pandiatonicism. The use of modal scales, pandiatonicism combined with colouristic dissonances and a generally dynamic and vital (Yoruba-derived) rhythmic language in Sowande's symphony are particularly evocative of the nationalist inspired textures of Russian composers such as Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. Sowande's Symphony also presents a variety of orchestral colour, within which woodwind, brass and percussion as well as strings are used with almost equal prominence, and consist of passages which range from sparse to furious, dramatic and grandiose textures.

Central to the overall formal outline of the work is a transformation process which begins in the first movement and continues until the last and within which (i.e. the transformation process) a Highlife tune is gradually presented. The last movement, in which this theme (Ex. 43) fully appears, is conceived as a reinterpretation of Highlife music making extensive use of melodic, harmonic and formal features derived from it. The Folk Symphony <sup>(1)</sup> is the largest known orchestral work by a Nigerian composer. Its important historical position is also suggested by the fact that it was specially commissioned to mark Nigeria's independence. <sup>(2)</sup> In the analysis below it is instructive to see how traditional Nigerian-derived elements are used within a predominantly European structure to achieve one of the most successful syncretic experiments in the tradition of Nigerian Art music.

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(1) See Chapter 5, p. 110

(2) The Symphony is scored for an orchestra consisting of 2 flutes, 2 oboes, cor anglais, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp and strings.

The first movement is in sonata form and retains the conventional scheme of thematic presentation as can be observed in Fig. VI. The main thematic material of the exposition is given as Exx. 29 and 30. Despite the introductory character of the opening bars (1-19), as a result of its slower tempo and the use of a pause in bar 19, important thematic material is presented there which receives extensive treatment in the course of the movement. The first quotation (of Yoruba melody) in the movement (Ex. 29d) appears in bars 19 ff (viola). Though still part of the first segment of the exposition it contrasts sharply with the preceding thematic ideas, showing greater affinity with the second segment of the exposition in its modal quality. The second segment begins in bar 50 and is approached through a change in time signature and a considerably tonally unstable transition (bars 42-50). The first theme in this segment (Ex. 30a) is a Yoruba melody and it is presented within a dance-like polyrhythmic context. Two other thematic ideas, Exx. 30b and c, appear in bars 86 ff and 103 ff taking the music from the A<sup>m</sup> of the Yoruba melody to the key of G major. The development, though relatively short, makes use of virtually all the material of the exposition as will be illustrated later. As Fig. VI shows the recapitulation basically re-expresses the exposition with the only notable changes occurring in the brief interjection of an F sharp area (bars 250-260) and the appearance of a codetta in bar 274 ff.

Throughout the movement there is a constant interaction between diatonic and modal harmonic features. The first seminal representation of this interaction occurs in Ex. 29d, bars 28 ff which features both a D diatonic key (phrase y) and an E modal centre (phrase x). This D-E conflict has been vertically foreshadowed in the opening bars of the movement (bars 1-19). Notable features here include the contrapuntal and overlapping presentation of thematic ideas and the use of pedals, including the D-E dissonance of bars 5-10. Above these pedals different thematic ideas are

FOLK SYMPHONY

FIGURE VI

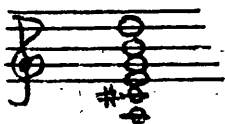
FIRST MOVEMENT : OVERVIEW OF FORM

Section	Bars	Main Themes	Main Tonal Areas
Exposition:			
1st segment	1-41	Ex.29 (a-d)	D
Transition	42-50		D, unstable
2nd segment	50-112	Ex.30 (a-c)	G <sup>m</sup>
Development:	113-153	Exx. 29 & 30	Generally unstable
Recapitulation:			
1st segment	154-193	Ex.29 (a-d)	
Transition	194-206		Generally unstable
2nd segment:	207-294	Ex.30 (a-c)	D
(Codetta)	(274-294)		(Digression to F <sup>#</sup> in bars 256-260)

presented by the flutes, clarinets and horns in a rather rhapsodic manner. Thus there is no definitive cadence until bar 19 where a short transition (bars 17-19) sets in.

The first thematic idea of the second segment of the exposition (bars 51-112) is neither in E minor nor G major as the key signature here might suggest. This melody, a Yoruba song, is the first major demonstration of the influence of Yoruba modality on the work. In the melody, (Ex. 30a) the pitch A functions as the note of repose. The accompaniment patterns to this melody, throughout its appearance in this section, admit the structural importance of the note A while at the same time reflecting the modal and the rhythmic character of the melody.

Most of the notes in the accompaniment fall within a compound eleventh chord structure on A:



In the use of this structure, prominence is given to A and its constituent triadic notes (C sharp and E). The generally linear cross-rhythmic use of these notes, however, is evidence of an accompaniment which tends to emphasise rhythmic, more than harmonic, support. It is against the background of the restrained harmonic-tonal focus of this section that the cadential ambiguity of the preceding transition (bars 46-50) can be viewed. In the second statement of the melody, now in the strings and flute (bar 70 ff) there is an increased rhythmic activity, the highlights of which are the standard pattern of the harp and the triangle, and the off-beat phrasing of both the trumpets and the trombones.

It is in the development section (bars 113-153) that the chromatic language of works like Oyigiyigi and Kyrie is most prominently recalled. Its opening bars progress from a brief B<sup>b</sup> tonal area (113-114), through another brief, C minor, key (115-120) to a modal section (121-130) where new pentatonic material (Ex. 31) is featured at different intervals a perfect fourth apart. Thus while it appears in a pentatonic scale on B<sup>b</sup> in the woodwind section, the strings present it on an E<sup>b</sup> pentatonic scale. This procedure directly evokes the homophonic-parallelism typical of Yoruba traditional music.

After this modal passage, an A flat chord emerges in bar 131 heralding a motif of Ex. 30b (cor anglais and harp). But any feeling of A flat is quickly dispelled and the development returns to its initial fragmentary texture. Between bars 131 and 139 the harmonic progression is so fluid there is a temporary sense of immobility within a generally scanty texture where phrases overlap and recall the opening bars of the movement. In bar 140 a sense of direction is initiated with the arrival of the F pedal and a consistent semiquaver unit. It is, however, not until bar 150 that the preparation towards the recapitulation begins. Here an embellishing diminished seventh of D, 07/I (Ex. 32) appears. All that happens between bar 150 and the recapitulation is a mere decoration of this chord. In bar 153 (third beat) this chord is transformed to its more stable parent a V7<sup>b</sup> which leads to the D major of the recapitulation (bar 154 ff).

As we have already noted, the recapitulation does not differ in any significant way from the exposition. There is, however, a brief digression to an F sharp passage in bars 256-260 where Ex. 30b appears in the strings section. This digression is an extension of the brief poly-tonal punctuation of bars 99-103 of the exposition where phrase x from Ex. 30b and a further phrase, Ex. 33, are juxtaposed. We shall see that these are

the two ideas which continuously recur in the remaining movements as part of the unifying elements in the Symphony. One of them, Ex. 33, constitutes the first reference to the main theme (Ex.43) of the fourth movement.

The opening section of the second movement (bars 1-30), see Fig. VII, recalls the character of the opening bars of the first in its contrapuntal presentation of different thematic ideas, and in the use of pedal. In addition, these opening bars (the first thematic area) have a subsidiary, anticipatory quality to the second thematic area of bars 31-58. There are five major reasons for this:

- i) The opening bars lack a single dominant thematic idea because of its contrapuntal presentation of thematic ideas which are of almost equal melodic status (Ex.34 a-c).
- ii) As a result of the generally chromatic character of the first segment, the second, in its more stable character, provides a resolution to it.
- iii) Each of the major paragraphs of the opening bars (bars 1-17, 17-27 and 27-31) tend to emphasise a move towards C (bars 17, 27 and 31) which is the first note of the second theme (bars 31-58).
- iv) The lack of an articulated transition and therefore a sudden change of texture with which the second main theme appears, and
- v) The fact that the second melody (Ex. 35) is more substantial in nature (in its length, its balanced symmetry and its modal clarity) when compared with the often chromatic character of the thematic elements of the first.

The most important formal feature of the second movement is that it continues a thematic process which has been initiated in the first

FOLK SYMPHONYFIGURE VIISECOND MOVEMENT : OVERVIEW OF FORM

Section	Bars	Main Themes	Main Tonal Areas
Exposition:			
A	1-30	Ex.34 (a-c)	C (very chromatic)
B	31-58	Ex.35	A <sup>m</sup> , B <sup>b<sup>m</sup></sup>
Transition	59-74		B minor
Development:			
C	75-90	Ex.36 c ↓	A minor → B <sup>b</sup> minor
D	91-121	Ex.36 d ↓	A minor
E	122-172	Ex.36 e	E <sup>b</sup>
Recapitulation:			
A	173-198	Ex.34 (a-c)	C
B	199-298	Ex.35	A <sup>m</sup> - B <sup>b<sup>m</sup></sup> - C



movement. A striking motif, Ex. 36a, presented in the opening bars is derived from Ex. 33 of the first movement. This motif is, in the second movement, part of a gradual unfolding of a theme (see Ex.36). This theme, Ex. 36e, which finally appears in bar 122 ff, is derived from a Nigerian Highlife tune. Soon after the theme is introduced, however, it deviates from its initial diatonic character limping up to the note G in bar 138 ff. This procedure features in all the appearances of this theme in the E flat section. It is important to note that it is only the diatonic part of Ex. 36e (bars 122-136) that constitutes a reference to the Highlife tune. It is not until the fourth movement that the complete tune appears. As can be observed in Fig. VII, a major function of the development is the presentation of the thematic process illustrated in Ex.36.

The movement also recalls the polyrhythmic texture, and the modal harmonies of the first. For example, in the second section of the development (bars 91-120), a consistently polyrhythmic texture is featured. As Ex.37 shows, important layers within this polyrhythmic texture include:

- i) the line played by the oboe, clarinet, bassoon, violins and violas which is conceived in 4 bar (2/2) phrases;
- ii) the line played by the trombone and trumpets;
- iii) the variants of the standard pattern played by the timpani and cowbells, and;
- iv) the lines provided by the trombone (3), cellos and double basses. These lines emphasise the main beats of the background  $\frac{6}{8}$  - a pattern also suggested by the harmonic rhythm.

A look at Ex. 38 (strings) illustrates the modal character of the harmonic context within which Ex.35 (another Yoruba pentatonic melody) is

presented in bars 31-58. This harmonic context is defined essentially by the continuous use of a dorian mode (on D). The use of D and A as pedals tends to emphasise the importance of the two notes within the melody as the "leading note" and the note of repose respectively. The harmonic procedure employed in the treatment of this melody towards the end of the movement differs slightly. When the theme reappears in the coda of bar 262 ff the accompaniment patterns now suggest a major scale. In bar 285 the melody moves up to C with a corresponding support in the accompaniment which now provides I-IV-ii-I, a pattern which continues till the last bar. It is significant to notice how Sowande has provided another solution to the problem of using modal melodies as closing themes. In the first movement of the African Suite he brings back the first theme, a more tonal melody, to close the work after an extensive coda. Here the modal character of Ex.35 is changed slightly during a short coda: the harmonic context of Ex.35 is transformed from an A modality to C major (diatonic).

The Rondo theme of the third movement (Ex.39) is a further development of motif t (Exx. 33 and 34) of the first and second movements, while the two episodes of the movement make use of two further Yoruba melodies. In the episodes, polyrhythms and modal harmonies are also recalled. The alternation of Yoruba - polyrhythmic, modal passages and those that are tonal, by now a stylistic constant of the symphony, is a procedure particularly appropriate to a rondo. The employment of rondo form in the third movement is also particularly suitable for further reiterations of motif t thus underlining the thematic unity between the different movements of the work. Furthermore, the use of a rondo here also reflects the general tendency of the Symphony towards freer forms. The signs are already there in the second movement where the commitment to a strict, conventional format is not very strong. As will be seen the fourth movement has a generally free formal outline.

In the third movement, the theme, presented in the first episode (Ex. 40, bars 34-51), is based on a Yoruba recitative-like panegyric poem. The poem normally uses three gradations analogous to the three main intonation levels of Yoruba language. These three levels have been adjusted here to the three pitches of a tonic triad in F, a chord which is reiterated throughout the section. Generally therefore, the section is an extensive dominant anticipation of the return of the main theme in bars 52-74. The second episode contrasts very sharply with the first in its sombre, modal harmonies - elements which respectively result from the traditional social context and the melodic structure of the thematic idea of the section - a Yoruba dirge, Ex. 41. The melancholy mood of this dirge is reflected in the slow moving homophonic chords and the ritualistic use of the gong - being the most prominent percussion accompaniment provided. Rhythmically this theme (played by the cor anglais) recalls the hemiola character of the second movement.

Like the previous Yoruba sections of the work the second episode does not feature a well-clarified harmonic-tonal goal, a feature conditioned by the modal structure of the dirge. The tonal ambiguity of the episode is advanced in the short transition of bars 72-74. In a manner reminiscent of the previous transition (bars 29-33) this one too ends with what appears to be a dominant preparation. What follows, however, is not F minor as suggested by the key signature but a minor chord on B flat. Unlike the previous Yoruba melodies, Ex. 41 does not feature a consistently reiterated note of repose. While F is emphasised in the first eight bars of the melody, the remaining eight bars lack any great prominence to any single note although A<sup>b</sup> appears more strongly in the final bar<sup>s</sup>. The modal character of Ex. 41 suggests a pandiatonic treatment of chords - a procedure which, as can be observed in Ex. 42, bars 75-83, is well exploited by Sowande.

In terms of harmonic-tonal and thematic activities, the last movement represents a large-scale resolution of the previous three movements. Its prevailing harmonic clarity contrasts with the incessant chromatic colourings and modal procedures of the three movements; while its main thematic material represents a realization of the thematic process which began in the first movement. The formal procedure of the movement (see Fig. VIII) which could be seen as a sonata form, enjoys considerable unconventionality and freedom both in its key sequences and in the rhapsodic presentation of themes as will be illustrated later. In addition, as Fig. VIII shows, the middle section does not constitute any substantial development. The musical idiom which the movement reinterprets is Highlife. In its evocation of this idiom, the movement consists of quotations of different melodic ideas and the use of rhythmic and formal procedures associated with it. For example, towards the end of the movement (bar 189 ff) are sporadic inventions of Highlife melodies (Exx.44 and 45) in a manner reminiscent of the collective improvisations of Highlife.

The opening bars of the movement are characterised by an unprecedented clarity: texture - homophonic and dance-like; harmony - diatonic. This feature is a major deviation from the opening bars of the previous three movements. While it highlights the apotheosis of the thematic process which began in the first movement, this clarity is also typical of Highlife music which the work reinterprets. The first and main thematic idea of the movement is given as Ex.43 and below it a retrospective summary of the thematic process that led to it. Ex.43 is a Highlife tune popular in Nigeria in the late 50's and early 60's.

The predominance of the Highlife idiom in this movement brings with it the use of simple and diatonic chords. This is often compensated for in the transitional sections which are often characterised by contrapuntal

FOLK SYMPHONYFIGURE VIIIFOURTH MOVEMENT : OVERVIEW OF FORM

Section	Bars	Major Themes	Main Tonal Areas
Exposition:			
A	1-28	Ex.43	D
Transition	28-49		D, E <sup>b</sup> , E minor B minor
B	50-81	Ex.44 and Ex.45	B <sup>b</sup>
Transition	82-93		B <sup>b</sup> , A <sup>b</sup>
Middle Section:			
C	93-130	Ex.45a	G <sup>m</sup>
Transition	131-140		Unstable
Recapitulation:			
A	141-168	Ex.43	D
Transition	169-188		Generally unstable
B	189-255	Exx.44 and 45	D
Coda:	256-282	Ex.30 (b-c) of first movement	D

textures and chromatic harmonies. For example, the homophonic character of the opening bars is abandoned in the transition (28-49) where there is increased activity on various levels: a quickening of tempo, greater density of texture (bars 28-35), an augmentation of the sequential motives of bars 14 ff, clarinets, of the first movement, and shifting tonal areas (as can be observed in Fig. VIII). The passage bursts climactically on a  $bII \frac{6}{4}$  (E minor) in bars 45-46. After this, the tempo slows down, the texture thins out and with the help of a short paragraph in which motif t (Ex. 33) is featured (in violins I), the  $bII \frac{6}{4}$  chord functions as a dominant preparation for the  $B^b$  of the next section (bar 50 ff, see Fig. VIII). Although the transition of bars 131-140 is shorter it features a comparable degree of activity.

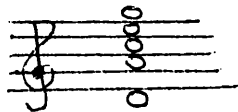
It is in section B of the exposition (bars 50-81) that the first major influences of Highlife are shown. The first seven bars of this section constitute an introduction to the remaining bars. Prominent features of this introduction are:

- i) the tonic - dominant chord cycles of the double basses and the harp;
- ii) the syncopated typical Highlife rhythm of the woodblock;
- iii) the melodic use of the augmented second and the minor seventh, and;
- iv) the harmonic prevalence of parallel 3rds.

All these features draw attention to the Highlife idiom of the movement. After this introduction, another syncopated popular Highlife tune, Ex.44, appears in bar 58 (trombone) with the added rhythmic support of the maraccas, and punctuated by a melodic fragment in bars 62-64 (bassoon). The significant thing about this melodic punctuation is the use of the minor seventh. Sowande realised the importance of this interval to Highlife,

hence its extensive use in the section. For example, in bar 70, the interval receives more prominence when the clarinets and the cellos join the bassoon while the melody is prolonged. Following the end of Ex.44 in bar 75 (first and second trombones), the clarinets, bassoon, celesta in bar 75 *ff* continue with series of minor sevenths. The status of this ubiquitous interval changes from a mere embellishment to a tonal area in bar 86 where Ex.44 is stated in the key of A flat which in turn leads to G, the modal key of the next section (94 *ff*).

A significant way in which the fourth movement recapitulates on the previous three is through the use of a modal organisation in the central section (bars 93-130). Like the modal sections of the previous movements the harmonic procedures here do not corroborate G major or E minor despite the key signature since none of the melodic material of the section ends on any of the notes of a G major triad. One particular chord features consistently throughout the section - a compound structure on D: an A<sup>7</sup> suspended over D:



a chord whose allegiance to the often pentatonic character (C D E G A) of the melodic material of the section is clear.

Basically, the recapitulation recreates the exposition (see Fig. VIII). The improvisatory character of the second thematic area (bars 189-255) is, however, more intense, compared with the corresponding part of the exposition, as more Highlife tunes are presented in a sporadic manner. These tunes can be observed in Exx.44 and 45. As in the exposition, the tunes continue to emerge over a consistent rhythmic pulse and a tonic-dominant harmonic ostinato, but within a generally more turgid and poly-rhythmic orchestral texture.

Two events signify the end of the Highlife section while anticipating the coda. The first is the elimination of the ubiquitous minor seventh and the second, the resurgence of an auxiliary motif which anticipates the brief link passage of bars 254-255, itself, like the coda (bars 256-282), brought over from the first movement. These two events happen simultaneously. While the auxiliary motif resurfaces in bar 233 ff (trombone, tuba and cellos) the minor seventh is eliminated a bar later, 234 ff, in the semiquaver passage of the violins and violas. The abandonment of this note consequently results in a stronger D tonality. In bar 250 the auxiliary motif develops into a triplet figure but slowing down to quavers in bars 254-255 and heralding the coda. The coda, which is based on Exx.30 b and c, two of the themes in the second thematic segment of the first movement, firmly remains in the home key of D major until the end of the work.

Despite the prominent use of African thematic, rhythmic and formal elements in the works discussed in this chapter, and in spite of the striking use of a European orchestra to imitate African instruments in them, it can still be argued that the hope for a truly authentic modern African Art music lies in works which make extensive or a predominant use of African instruments. In this regard and as our last example in this chapter we shall look at Euba's Abiku (for three-part choir and Nigerian instruments). Although only five instruments are featured in the score, each of the instruments can be doubled in performance to create an orchestral effect.<sup>(1)</sup>

The text used in the vocal part is a poem by the same name by a significant Nigerian poet, J.P. Clark. Abiku (Born to die) is a poem which centres on the belief of reincarnation among the Yorubas:

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(1) A point made by the composer during my interview with him.



"When a woman loses successive offspring in childhood it is believed that it is the same child who keeps coming and going. Such a child is sometimes referred to as an Elegbe, a member of a company whose domain is in the spirit world. Before coming to the material world the child makes a pact with his company to return to the spirit world as soon as possible and certain rites need to be made to compel it to stay." (1)

In the discussion below the work will be examined under four headings:

The traditional instruments, pitch structure, rhythmic organisation, and form.

a) The traditional instruments

The instruments used in the work are Gudugudu, Ikoru, each of which plays only two tones; and Agogo, Igbin and Osugbo, each of which produces only one tone. The type of gudugudu used in the work is a "small, single head, bowl-shaped membrane drum which has a tuning paste affixed to the centre of its head. It is played with two hard leather strikers twisted like a twine". (2) Its two tones are generally a fifth apart. The Ikoru is a wooden idiophone which produces two tones a third apart. It is played with two soft sticks. The Agogo, a metal gong, is played with a thick hard stick. The Igbin is a single head drum with a tough membrane played with two long supple sticks to produce a dry, tonally indiscrete, sound while the Osugbo is a resonant, single-headed drum played by "using the stick and hand technique". (3)

b) Pitch structure

As a result of the differentiations in the tones of the instruments, the various rhythmic patterns which they produce are also registral melodies. This term, as mentioned earlier, refers to melodies based on approximate tone levels. These tones can be ranked in order of register but the intervals between them are not fixed. The reason for this (as

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(1) Euba, A. Preface to Abiku.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

pointed out in the discussion on Igi nla so) is the lack of absolute tuning procedures for the instruments. Another reason is the fact that the tones which they produced are blurred. In Abiku, as in traditional Yoruba instrumental music, registral melodies exist on two levels: those that are formed between the tones of individual instruments and those that result from the interaction between two or more instruments. The total number of tones that could be heard in the instrumental section of Abiku is five. These five possible tone levels, however, rarely occur together because of (a) the staggered entries of phrases, and (b) the occasional use of rests in individual horizontal lines. The opening bars of the work shown in Ex.46 illustrate the typical variety of alignment that one finds between different instrumental lines in the work.

The organisation of pitch in the vocal part of the work reveals an attempt to provide a similar texture to that of the instrumental section. The extension of the principle of registral melody is vividly shown in the use of clefless notation for the vocal lines, Ex. 47. The characteristic blurred pitches of the drums is also simulated in the vocal parts since singers are not "required to be in unison and should ideally select individual pitches".<sup>(1)</sup> This freedom of pitch-selection also reinforces the element of indeterminacy inherent in the "relative pitch" feature of the Yoruba drums. We can conclude that the use of a vocal organisation, which is reminiscent of Sprechgesang as well as being evocative of the "singing-speaking" style of Yoruba music, is conceptually related to the texture of the instrumental section. As in the instrumental section, the lack of a tonal direction in the vocal part also poses a problem of movement. While the element of rhythm is used to overcome this problem in the instrumental section (see below) the organisation of texture serves a similar purpose in the vocal section. The juxtapositions of contrapuntal

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(1) Euba, A. Ibid.

and relatively homophonic passages are important for heightening and lessening tension - a procedure which matches the continuous reflection of hope and delusion in the poem: the optimism which comes with the birth of a new child and the feeling of delusion which follows his "return to the spirit world". An illustration of the alternations of contrapuntal and homophonic textures to achieve a dramatic effect in the work is shown in Ex. 48, bars 70-84.

(c) Rhythmic organisation

The exclusive use of African percussion instruments in Abiku implies the predominance of the element of rhythm over other musical parameters in the work. From a stylistic point of view, therefore, the work represents a culmination of the tendency in Euba's works, such as The Wanderer and Scenes from Traditional Life, to emphasise strong rhythmic characteristics.

The 'primary-secondary' dichotomy of Yoruba instrumental organisations is often recalled in the use of instruments in Abiku. While the Agogo and the gudugudu sometimes provide repetitive phrases (as in bars 1-15), Ex. 46, the Igbin and Osugbo are often conceived as "lead instruments" as in bars 1-15. This principle does not however continue throughout the work. In bar 45, for example, the Agogo and the gudugudu abandon their regular patterns. They join the remaining three instruments to produce rhythmic figurations which change. A sense of movement and direction is captured in the work through (a) the use of shifting time lines (Ex.49), (b) the recurrences and variations of rhythmic patterns, and (c) the widening or contraction of cyclic patterns (Ex.50).

The organisation of rhythmic phrases in cycles, a carry over from traditional Yoruba music, lends to Abiku a spiral character.<sup>(1)</sup> Central

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(1) As a result of the prevalence of ostinato figures in African music, analysts have described it as having a spiral as distinct from a linear character, see for example D. Locke. Op.cit. p.217.

to the identification of cycles in the work is the issue of phrasing.

Three main criteria which are crucial in establishing phrase divisions are (a) the use of repeating units and their variants, (b) changes in tone levels and (c) the use of rests. The interaction of two or more of these criteria often produces a hierarchy of phrasings of two or more layers in depth as illustrated in Ex. 51. This element of inherent stratification, that is the occurrences of perceptible levels of rhythmic phrases within individual lines, is another aspect of the stratified texture of the work.

(d) Form and direction

Three main elements typify the structural outline of Abiku:



- (i) the reliance on the poetic text as a formal prop;
- (ii) the use of the element of continuous variations; and
- (iii) the preponderant use of instrumental interludes to demarcate sub-sections.

An interpretation of the formal design of the work is given in Fig. IX which shows the large-scale structural use of the rhythmic procedures identified earlier. Elements which are highlighted in the example include the various sub-sections which often rely on changes in rhythmic patterns, and the use of instrumental interludes. Most importantly, the diagram shows how local, sub-sectional rhythmic patterns are conceived within a largescale ternary structure. While the generally complex rhythmic organisation in the first 186 bars of the work corresponds with the increasing agitation in the poem, the overall ternary structure of the work is overtly at variance with the main thematic divisions of the text. The music assumes an independent interpretation of the dramatic content of the poem. Within the overall ternary structure of the work, there is a process of continuous variation relying on the constant changes in rhythmic procedures highlighted in Exx. 49, 50 and 51. Thus the reflection

FIGURE IXABIKU : OUTLINE OF FORM

Main Poetic Themes	Bars	Sub-Section	Rhythmic Features	Special Features	Overall Form
Establishment of main theme - the definition of Abiku	1-15	Instrumental introduction	Conflicting cycles. Agogo and gudugudu provide regular time-lines (see Ex.46)	-	↑ SECTION A (1-110) ↓
↓	16-44		"		
	45-65	Instrumental interlude	All instruments provide phrases which continuously vary.		
	65-101		"		
Conditions of living, poor accommodation	102-110	Transition	"	Sparser texture	↑ SECTION B (111-186) ↓
↓	111-152	Instrumental interlude (111-143)	112-152: Change to hemiola patterns		
		Use of spoken texts (144-150)	Instruments continue with irregular rhythmic patterns	Rhythmic build up and use of spoken text in bars 144-151.	
	153-186	Instrumental interlude (153-158)	(1) Conflicting cycles continue. (2) Gudugudu-fluctuations of cycles. (3) Ikoro - no consistent cycle. (4) Igbin regular cycle in 153-159 & 171-178. (5) Osugbo - used as a lead instrument	A pause at the end of bar 186	

FIGURE IX (Cont.)

Main Poetic Themes	Bars	Sub-Section	Rhythmic Features	Special Features	Overall Form
Warning to Abiku: We know the knife scars serrating down your back and front...	187-210		Regular rhythmic patterns are clearly restored. <u>Agogo</u> , <u>gudugudu</u> and to a certain extent <u>Ikoro</u> play series of regular, though conflicting cycles while Igbin and Osugbo provide improvisatory lines.	Slower tempo	 SECTION C (87-278) 
	210-236	Instrumental interlude	Agogo provides regular (3-bar) cycles. Gudugudu provides one-bar cycles. Ikoro and Igbin's parts are irregular.	Gradual rhythmic build up in bars 210-238	
Plea to Abiku: step in and stay for her body is so tired, her mild is sour	236-245		Agogo, Ikoro provide regular patterns. Igbin and Osugbo function as lead instruments.	Faster tempo voices predominantly homophonic in rhythm.	
	246-278	Instrumental interlude 246-250  Instrumental postlude - 275-278	Primary-secondary division in instrument continues.	Fluctuation in density of texture	

of the ternary structure of the work relies significantly on the re-establishment of the perceptible pulse of the opening section, (bars 1-101) which have been abandoned in the middle section, bars 102-152. In addition to the use of rhythm as an important structural element, other elements also perform important formal functions. Thus tempo (in its fluctuations, e.g. in bars 120-124), texture (in its gradual build up - see for example bars 144-150), the use of rests (the pause after bar 186 being the most significant as it separates the second section from the third). The coincidences of the fragmentary transition of bars 102-110 and the pause after bar 186 (the two paragraphs which help to isolate the ternary structure of the work) in areas of decisive rhythmic changes, underline the importance attached to the parameter of rhythm in the work and in this lies its strong African character.

CHAPTER NINESOLO SONGSArtistic Transformation of Folk Songs

In Chapter 4 it was shown how the use of traditional Nigerian elements constitutes an important issue in the works of the composers of Church music in Nigeria. Such elements include the retention of parallel contour between text and melodic lines and the use of modal scales. Despite their new features, many of those compositions still share an important feature with many traditional Nigerian songs; they are used contextually within religious services.

One recent feature of Modern Nigerian music, notably from the 1960s, is the transformation of traditional folk songs into Art songs conceived in a European, contemplative, idiom. As a result of their contemplative nature and the fact that they strive for higher artistic levels, greater skills and imagination are reflected in fusing traditional and European elements in the new Art songs. This is because issues such as coherence and variety, which may be overshadowed because of the extra-musical, religious context within which Church compositions are performed, become more important as compositional criteria.

In the discussion which follows, examples of Art songs, based on folk songs, by Uzoigwe, Euba and Ndubuisi - three of the selected composers who have set folk songs - will be examined. In the discussion we shall focus on how and to what extent important features of the folk songs are highlighted or compromised in their new settings. It must be remembered that the primary reason for using Folk songs as the basis of new Art works centres on the need to create works which maintain strong links with traditional vocal idiom.



Uzoigwe's Four Igbo Songs reveal a host of interesting elements of construction. The folk material (Ex. 1) on which the first song, ERIRI NGERINGE (a Riddle), is based is characterised by three important features:

- i) the song employs a pentatonic scale, Ex. 2;
- ii) two motivic features - an auxiliary motif and a syncopated rhythmic figuration are prominently featured within the material (Ex. 1);
- iii) in the song, textual contours generally correspond with melodic contours as illustrated in Ex. 4.

These three germinal features provide the criteria for the setting of the Folk material. The overall form of the work divides into three sections characterised by a progressively fragmentalised texture - while in the first section (bars 1-13) the folk song is presented, its variant (Ex. 3) is stated a perfect fourth higher in the second, bars 14-32. The third section (bars 33-46) consists of continuous variations of Ex. 4, itself a fragment of Ex. 3. Here, Ex. 4 is developed into a call and response pattern which continues until the end of the piece. In every successive section of the piece the importance of D as the note of repose becomes clearer as Exx. 3 and 4 illustrate.

The open-ended format of the piece (framed by a progressive emphasis on the note D and an increasingly fragmentary texture) is directly evocative of the principle of continuous variation employed in the performance of the song in its traditional context. The accompaniment

patterns provided by both the piano and the marracas emphasise the syncopated character of the vocal part - a character which often derives from the speech rhythm of the texts. The overall cross-rhythmic character of the piece derives from two conflicting variants of the gong rhythm provided by the piano and the marracas, both of which seldom coincide with the rhythms of the vocal part (Ex. 5). In addition, the harmonic structure of the piano part constitutes a subtle reinterpretation of the modal procedures of the Folk song. The chordal cycle (Ex. 5 a) which permeates the entire piece, confirms the D modality of the song by revolving around a dominant seventh-type sonority built on D.

The second song, OYAROMA (a love song), contrasts with the first in a variety of ways. The text of the Folk song centres on an intensely emotional expression of love from a man to a beautiful lady. The song is in a strophic form whose internal structure is characterised by a repetitive call and response pattern (Ex. 6). This characteristic of the text - the call and response pattern - guarantees important organisational principles: the recurrences of a basic motif (textual and melodic) as well as a developing or variation process. The recurring phrase is set to the text Mmm-u-Yaroma and it occurs alternately with series of changing patterns as can be observed in Ex. 6. The most significant appearance of Ex. 6a is in bars 10-15 (first stanza) where it is elongated to a six bar phrase, thus delaying the appearance of the recurring phrase a little longer. The constant-variable feature of each stanza is also reflected on a larger structural level. As a result of changes to the text in the three stanzas of the work, slight musical changes are often needed to cope with the contour demands of the new texts. For example, in the second stanza (as a result of the contour of a new text - Nna oma) - the melodic phrase is adjusted to Ex. 7. In the third stanza, where the original text nnemo ma returns, the recurring phrase returns to its

original version, Ex. 6x. Thus while key musical features are reiterated in the three stanzas the overall form of the work presents a developing strophic plan in which musical changes are made to accommodate new texts.

The use of a recurrent phrase, mm mm uyaroma, (bars 5-6 for example) helps to emphasise a poetic idea - a rhetoric expression of love. In addition, however, its recurrences help to reiterate a melodic pitch (A) which functions as a note of repose within the F heptatonic scale of the song. The harmonic accompaniment provided by the piano reflects the repetitive nature of the song through its recurring harmonic-rhythmic phrase (Ex. 8). This phrase distinguished by its unresolving seventh chord also provides pitches which continuously clash with those of the vocal part. This, in addition to the juxtapositions of extreme ranges of the piano, provide ample reflection of the lovers' emotion. The harmonic pattern of the piano focuses on F as the tonal centre. The note A rather than being a modal centre as reflected in the Folk song is interpreted as a component of the triad on F.

The call and response pattern is also featured in Ite Etipa Etipa. Like Uyaroma its recurring phrase, (Ex. 9, phrase x), also serves to maintain an important musical element - a 2 bar motif which helps to establish the C mode of the song. The developing process of the song is also directly linked to the continuous change in the text of the call (see Ex. 9y) since the intervallic changes in phrase y exist to accommodate the changing contour of new words. But these linguistic demands are met within the constraints of certain key musical considerations: the continuous establishment of C as a note of repose in the last bar of each phrase and the recurrence of prominent motives (x and y).

Compared with Eriri Ngerige and Oyaroma the pitch structure of Ite Etipa Etipa is more varied. While within the song certain notes can be

identified as core pitches, because of their prominence, others exist only as occasional chromatic alterations. Thus within its pitch structure a core mixolydian mode is identifiable (Ex. 10); while notes like G<sup>b</sup>, A<sup>b</sup> and E are alterations of core pitches. The accompaniment provided by the piano is based on a harmonic series derived from both the core and the altered pitches. Certain important features can be observed in this piano part:

- (i) in its relative rhythmic variety (see Exx. 11-13) it offsets the repetitive character of the vocal part; and
- (ii) the constant - variable element of the song is reflected in it through the recurrences of certain rhythmic patterns (Exx. 11-13) all of which are often at variance with the rhythmic figurations in the vocal part.

The tension arising from the differences between the rhythmic patterns of the piano and those of the voice is also underlined by the dissonant relationship which often obtains between their pitch structures. The formal setting of the piece in its use of a continuous process of variation also evokes an extemporisational idiom typical of the traditional performance context of the folk material.

The folk song used in Tuzu (Ex. 15) differs sharply from the three songs above. In its use of a diatonic scale it belongs to the syncretic genre of Igbo music earlier referred to in Chapter 4. It is set in a composite ternary form in which the middle section is further divided into a tri-sectional pattern:

<u>Bars</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Tonality</u>	<u>Subsections</u>
1-7	Introduction		
8-14	A	↑  E <sup>b</sup>  ↓	a
15-22	B		b
22-30			c
31-36			b
37-44	C		a

The accompaniment also provides two different variants of the gong rhythm: one variant, Ex. 16, is given to the marracas while the piano provides Ex. 15a. This feature underlines the importance of rhythm in the work. Since the harmonic character of the piano is a direct reflection of the repetitive melodic feature of the vocal part, it is also characterised by a repetitive chordal pattern (Ex. 15). It is thus mainly in the polyrhythmic character of the piece that limited interest is generated.

As shown above, important features of Uzoigwe's treatment of folk songs are:

- (i) the use of polyrhythmic textures which accentuate the rhythmic and percussive character of the folk material;
- (ii) the use of a loose, open ended format which evokes the extemporisational element of the traditional performance contexts of the folk songs; and
- (iii) the provision of an harmonic accompaniment which predominantly reflects the modal character of the song by a deliberate avoidance of strong diatonic procedures.

Two contradictory features characterise Euba's treatment of folk materials in his Six Yoruba Songs. While the miniature structures of the Yoruba folk songs are left intact, that is, not subjected to structural

expansions as observed in Uzoigwe's songs - an attempt to retain the original identities of the songs - his piano accompaniments are often insensitive to those identities, a fact which the composer freely admits:

"the piano writing (in these songs) makes no attempt at a Yoruba interpretation and is conceived entirely in terms native to the main (European) pianistic culture".

This particular feature is noticeable in pentatonic songs like Omo Jowo and Meta meta l'ore. In each of these the pattern of the piano accompaniment constitutes a radical negation of the modal element of the vocal part. For example, the accompaniment in Omo Jowo is characterised by Chopinesque figuration (Ex. 17) with lavish use of chromatic decorations. The piano background of Ore meta lacks the chromatic character of Omo Jowo but in its diatonic orientation negates the pentatonic scale of the vocal part.

The songs Mo jawe gbege and Ose gbe na, differ from the rest mainly in their highly diatonic character. The two songs belong to the syncretic tradition of the Yoruba-Anglican church idiom. The homophonic - diatonic character of the piano therefore represents an appropriate reflection of their syncretic character. Two songs, however, stand out among the six. Their settings constitute an appropriate interpretation of their traditional modal quality. These songs are Mole jiyen yo and Agbe. Mole jiyen yo is a song in a heptatonic scale usually performed for twins whose birth in Yoruba land is customarily an occasion for special ceremonies. According to traditional Yoruba beliefs certain religious rites have to be carried out with the birth of twins if they are not to suffer premature death. In its first six bars (Ex. 18) the song is characterised by an emphasis on the note B. Towards the end of the song (bars 7-12) there is a shift of emphasis since textual and melodic patterns combine to

establish a C modality in the song. This results from the recurrences of certain textual-melodic patterns (Ex. 18). The harmonic emphasis on a chord built on the note B (bars 1-6) reflects the prominence of that note in the vocal part of the same bars. Likewise, the change in the melodic pattern (i.e. the voice part) of bars 7-12 is matched by a corresponding change in the patterns of the piano accompaniment with eventual support for the C modality of the song without the use of strong diatonic progressions.

Agbe is a dirge which is commonly performed among the Yorubas during the funeral rites of an important person in the society. The melody of the dirge is one of the principal themes of Sowande's Folk Symphony (see Chapter 8). The song is in a pentatonic mode on  $D^b$  whose fourth note,  $A^b$ , see Ex. 19, functions as a note of repose. The hemiola character of the song, a rhythmic element which is imaginatively exploited in the Folk Symphony, is itself an important rhythmic feature of Yoruba ritual music. The piano accompaniment of the song enhances this hemiola pattern in its provision of a constant  $\frac{3}{4}$  which conflicts with the occasional  $\frac{6}{8}$  of the vocal part (Ex. 19). It also presents a subtle harmonic reinterpretation of the modal character of the song. Although the constituent pitch elements of the piano part extend beyond the pentatonic vocabulary of the song, its pandiatonic character constitutes an appropriate reflection of the modal identity of the song. Thus, despite the  $B^b$  minor key signature, the tonal direction of the piano part remains, for most of the time, ambiguous. The cadential emphasis on  $A^b$  in the last bar represents an acknowledgement of that note as the modal centre of the vocal part.

While, as reflected in the discussion above, Euba retains both their formal and melodic character, in Ndubuisi's works, the folk songs often undergo transformations. Unlike those of the two composers, however, the

folk melodies used in Ndubuisi's works often belong to the syncretic tradition in their use of diatonic scales. His harmonic interpretation often reflects this heritage in its diatonic orientation and the use of chromatic embellishments such as the raised second and the minor seventh. These are stylistic features also commonly found in the syncretic, Highlife music. The historical reasons for the presence of these European derived intervallic elements in Igbo music have been discussed in Chapter 4. As the most consistent and devoted composer of vocal music in Igbo land, Ndubuisi's works are symbolic of the use of syncretic folk songs as a basis for new Art songs in that part of the country. It would be appropriate here to examine selected works from this category of Art songs based on folk materials.

Nwa mgbogho delu uli is a song of beauty in which a man admires the traditional Igbo decorations (ULI) on a beautiful girl. The song is in a ternary outline characterised by an open-ended format. While the original folk tune, Ex. 20, is presented in the first section (bars 1-21), the remaining two sections, bars 22-33 and bars 34-40, constitute development and variations of the first. Though generally related motivically, the materials used in the three sections (Exx. 20a, b, c) are distinct from each other.

The piano part of Nwa mgbogho delu uli functions not as a mere accompaniment. It engages in a dialogue with the voice, supplementing its harmonic as well as its rhythmic progressions especially through the use of an extended introduction (bars 1-4) and interludes (bars 11-21). For example, the three figurations which will be used to articulate the ternary structure of the piece (Exx. 21a, b, c) are presented in the introduction. Thus, motif 'a' helps to define the ternary structure of the piece (in the absence of tonal change) by being presented at the beginning and end of sections. The second section, noted for its increased rhythmic activity,



is distinguished by the prominence of Ex. 22, another syncopated motif, which is rhythmically related to Ex. 21a. As the dominant rhythmic element of the last section, motif 21c also introduces a conflicting metre ( $\frac{6}{4}$ ) which underlines the bravura ending of the piece.

The development of simple folk material into a fairly extensive form is illustrated in Anwu ti Mini Dze. The text of the song is a prayer usually recited for a pregnant Ibo woman for a successful delivery. The form of the song is ternary:

A(prelude)	B(development)	C(coda)
bars: 1-10	11-44	45-49

While the original folk song is presented as a prelude in a quasi-recitative manner, with the use of vocal glides and pauses (Ex. 23) to reflect its traditional mode of delivery, the middle section functions as a development. The main features of this development are the expansion of the tritonic scale of the prelude to a pentatonic scale (Ex. 24), its extended vocal range and the abandonment of the tempo fluctuations of the prelude.

Considerable interest is provided in the accompaniment which consists of varied figurations, the most prominent of which are the pulsating arpeggio rhythmic phrase and the chordal figure (see Ex. 25a and b) with which it alternates. Decorative pitches, the minor 7th, minor 6th and the augmented 5th, also provide some harmonic interest within the unchanging  $E^b$  tonality of the song.

Despite the stylistic differences between the categories of works examined above they share certain important features in common. These include the general lack of modulation within the tonal frameworks of the songs, the provision of a harmonic-tonal vocabulary which often constitute an interplay between the modal character of the songs and European functional harmony, the use of dynamic and often complex rhythmic textures, a regard for the linguistic demands of text and the

use of formal procedures (including the call-responsorial pattern) which are evocative of traditional delivery patterns of the folk songs. As we shall see, these stylistic features occupy important compositional positions in the conception of original Art songs which make use of indigenous texts.

### Original Art Songs

Original Art songs (i.e. those not making use of pre-existing traditional songs) by Nigerian composers retain many elements which characterise traditional vocal music, the most significant of which is the relationship between the contours of melody and text. This is consistent with the objective of evolving Art songs which, though following the patterns of European lied still maintain strong links with traditional models. As the discussion above shows, the need to reflect and preserve the identity of the folk tunes in those works often imposes a considerable constraint on composers, especially with regards to harmonic and formal considerations. Even though such constraints are absent in original songs, the need to incorporate elements from traditional vocal idiom still form an important compositional element in them as the works to be discussed below will show. By looking at the works of Bankole, Euba and Ndubuisi, it will become clear that a fusion of traditional and European elements is achieved in a variety of ways.

The Three Yoruba Songs written in 1959 by Bankole are the most popular, as well as being stylistically representative, of his works in this genre. In addition, being one of his earliest works they are prophetic of many of the stylistic features of his later compositions. Their syncretic character is amply described by the composer who, reflecting later about the work, states that "In the songs I attempted to achieve truly logogenic melodies without landing in the 'square boxes' that typify such folk type melodies and to fuse these with meaningful harmonic progressions in the European classical

idioms. To my delight it was not only possible to achieve this synthesis but to experiment with newer sounds which do not, at least, interrupt the logogenic flow of the melodic lines."<sup>(1)</sup>

The text of the first song, Iya, is an expression of love and gratitude from a child to his mother. Such an expression of gratitude for the role of a mother (in rearing a child to maturity) is a familiar theme of many Yoruba songs. Such songs are often characterised by sentimental and emotional outbursts and it is a feature which is (also) reflected in Bankole's Iya. The outer sections of this ternary song catalogue "some of the responsibilities of a mother to her baby"<sup>(2)</sup> while the middle section digresses to a highly emotional reiteration of the indispensability of the mother to her child and an offering of prayer for her by the child. These sectional poetic divisions are reinforced musically through the use of different accompaniment patterns, and thematic as well as tonal contrasts. The recurring, rather Schubertian, figuration in the accompaniment (Ex. 26) which functions as the introduction as well as pervading the outer sections is characterised by the use of chromatic alternations notably the minor 7th, augmented 2nd and augmented 5th. In the middle section the change from the D<sup>b</sup> major key of the work to the relative minor, the decrease in tempo and the change to a more reflective accompaniment (Ex. 27), provide an appropriate musical reflection of the sentimental nature of the text of the section. The reflective character of this section is anticipated in the fugato passage (Ex. 27), bars 13-15.

One important feature of this song is the pervading parallel between the contour of the linguistic protostructure and its melodic setting. As Ex. 28 of bars 4-7 illustrates, Bankole's setting represents

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(1) Introduction to Three Yoruba Songs, Ife, 1976.

(2) Ibid.

a direct translation of the inflections of the text. The musical constraint within which this translation takes place is, of course, the diatonic framework of the piece. The use of sequences in the piece is significant and strengthens this correspondence between text and tone as well as helping to provide musical variety. In addition to serving musical and textual functions, it also often enhances the sentimental nature of the middle section. For example, the downward sequential pattern framed by a series of descending fourths in Ex. 29 (bars 17-27) provides a brief relief from the repetitive harmonic patterns of bars 16-23. In addition, it maintains the contour pattern of the words Iya mi (my mother). The choice of words in the song also suggests a deliberate decision to choose those which have the same linguistic contour and therefore are amenable to being set to the same melodic contour. For example, the prevalence of the descending 4ths/5ths in such bars as 17-29 (Ex. 29), a motivic feature which performs a unifying role across the first and second sections, is not unrelated to the fact that words such as feran mi (likes me) (bars 18-19), ni i mi (my needs) (bars 20-21) and Iya a mi (bars 25-27) have the same contour patterns. This contour pattern is well reflected by the descending 4ths/5ths sequences (Ex. 29)

The normal speech rhythms of words are often retained. For example, the recurrences of the word Nigbati in (bars 7-9) followed in each case by words which develop the poetic theme is set to a rhythmic figuration which reflects its speech rhythm. Again the recurrences of this linguistically-generated motif provide local, structural coherence. The gradual rise which starts in bar 28 and culminates in the climax of bar 32 is a reversal of the sequential descent of bars 24-27; here it is used to reiterate emphatically the rare love of the child for his mother. As a result of the expansion of the intervals within this sequential build up (from the initial 4th (bars 27-28) to a minor 7th (bars 31-37)), the vocal part actually approaches

speech - a feature which is articulated in the recitative line of bars 40-41. The increased emotive element in these speech-like bars is reflected in the piano interlude of bars 42-44, a short section which also prepares the return of the A section.

The second song, Ja itanna to ntan, is based on a popular Yoruba poem which emphasises the urgency of time and advises people not to procrastinate. This advice is summarised in the phrase Ja itanna to ntan to tutu to si dara which literally means "pluck flowers while they are in bloom". The second line of the poem goes on Mura sise aanu re kile ola k'o to mo (be steadfast in doing good). These two poetic themes - the urgency of time and the need for consistent service of goodwill provide the background for certain musical elements of the song. The ternary structure of the work, for example, uses line one in the outer sections while the second line appears in the middle section. The accompaniment patterns provided by the piano divide into three main types. The fast, syncopated, rhythmic pattern of bars 1-16, Ex. 30a, while recalling the cyclic progressions in Iya (Ex. 26) tend to reflect the urgency of time; the dissonant, chromatic material of bars 17-24, Ex. 30b, and the slower chordal patterns, Ex. 30c, bars 29 ff, which underline the contrasting character of the middle section.

Apart from performing harmonic functions, the use of chromaticism in the piece has a quasi-programmatic basis. An important feature of the first section is that it is framed by an increasingly chromatic density. Thus, the recurring harmonic cycle of bars 1-16 is, in bar 17, relieved by a new harmonic texture. This dissonant, chromatic texture becomes delicately agitated in bars 21 (Ex. 30d). On the whole the increased chromatic, rhythmic and percussive character of these bars (17-24) - a texture strikingly similar to those of the Passion Sonata<sup>(1)</sup> - tends to

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(1) See Chapter 7, p. 174

accentuate the increasing emphasis on the urgency of time expressed in the vocal part. The emerging polarity between the tonal orientation of the vocal part and its negation by the chromatic nature of the piano part (bars 17-23), another instance of Bankole's use of quasi-bitonal technique, is also part of this emphasis. From this discussion it can be seen that the effectiveness of the song lies in the coincidence of poetic as well as musical considerations. While underlining a gradual increase in the creation of tension, the increasing chromatic orientation of the first section also helps to paint the poetic sense, the urgency of time - a sense also reflected in the onomatopaeic imitation of the ticking of the clock in bars 19, 21 and 24. Though devoid of its intense chromatic character, the middle section continues the tonal ambiguity of the first, notably through the use of non (tonally) functional juxtapositions of chords. Throughout all the sections of the piece there is also a continuous reflection of the contour of text in the melodic lines. Like Iya, this often relies on the use of sequences.

The text of the third song, Kiniun, centres on the supremacy of the lion as the "king" of the forest. The stillness of the forest, the roaring power of the lion - the two core poetic themes of the text - provide a basis for the cultivation of pictorial effects through the use of the piano as well as in the vocal part. The ternary form of the piece also takes its cue from these two main poetic themes. The narrative character of the song relies significantly in the use of the piano whose function goes beyond that of a mere accompaniment. Its harmonic patterns are clearly influenced by the organisational pattern of the vocal part. Unlike the two previous songs, the organisation of the vocal part follows the traditional Yoruba modal pattern - defined in this case by an anhemitonic heptatonic scale in which the supertonic functions as a note of repose. The establishment of the supertonic as a note of repose relies on (1) its

frequent occurrences in the melody especially on important metric positions, and (2) the enhancement of its status through the emphasis on its neighbouring notes (Ex. 31). This modal quality of the vocal part receives ample reflection in the rather impressionistic accompaniment of the piano with its pandiatonic character.

In bars 14-38 where the supremacy of the lion is affirmed (its roaring power, and the stillness of the forest which follows it) some elements of construction should be noted.

- (1) The roar of the lion is amply reflected in the wide leaps of the vocal part while the stillness of the forest is reflected in the narrow melodic range of bars 17 ff.
- (2) While the wide leaps are characterised by dynamic and rhythmic articulation, the stillness of the forest is articulated by a sudden change in dynamics (ff - ppp) and to a whole tone phrase making use of three-note motifs.

These dramatic elements are also enhanced through the use of the piano whose part has shifted from the modal flavour of the opening bars to impressionistic figurations (bars 17-34, Ex. 32). The whole-tone element of the opening vocal part is also recalled with greater focus in bars 28-34.

The prominence of the whole tone interval in the piece deserves some comment. There is a relationship between the harmonic features of Kiniun and the linguistic demands of the Yoruba text. In this regard the opening bars are germinal. The modal character of bars 1-10 is linked to the constraints imposed by the text. The words Kiniun - Loba have a linguistic pattern which is reflected in the musical setting (Ex. 31).

Here the words Loba and Eranko, when they occur in the same sentence, have to be rendered on the same pitch level for their meaning to be properly reflected. The setting of these two words to the note G is determined by the fact the initial two pitches (set to the word kiniun) in bar 4 are F and A. The words Loba and Eranko have to be set to a pitch level between F and A, if they are to be linguistically meaningful with the word Kiniun. Considering the importance of the whole-tone scale in the setting of Yoruba words the note G is the only choice. The initial emphasis on the note G in bar 5 (though very much a linguistically determined feature) helps to define the modal goal of the melody in bars 4-10. In other words, the establishment of that modality of the song in bars 4-10 is not unrelated to the linguistic considerations described above. Thus the emphasis on the note g as well as the prevalence of the interval of the major second both have a linguistic basis. These two features eventually define and prescribe some of the musical criteria for the continuity of both the harmonic and melodic features of the piece.

The melodic procedures of Euba's songs maintain clearer links with traditional idioms. In his Three Songs (for baritone, piano and IYA-ILU Dundun) such links are noticeable in the use of Yoruba derived scales - irregular phrasing and language-derived melodic and rhythmic patterns. The first of the songs, Agbe, is based on the text of a traditional dirge which Euba had used earlier in his Six Yoruba Songs.<sup>(1)</sup> Important structural features of the vocal part are i) the employment of a Yoruba derived heptatonic scale on C in which the second degree functions as the note of repose (a feature shared with Bankole's Kiniun); and ii) the pervading similarity between the contour of text and melody.

As a result of the parallel contour between text and melody, the second section of the binary outline of the piece (bars 26-59), which uses the

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(1) See p. 273



same text, constitutes a direct variation on the music of the first section. A comparison between the corresponding phrases of the two sections, Exx. 33 and 34a, shows that they directly duplicate each other in terms of melodic contour although actual intervallic contents often differ.

While maintaining melodic correspondence with the first section, the second introduces an increased emotional intensity into the piece. This is reflected in the greater variety of intervals in the section. The agony caused by, and the lamentation over, the death of an important person in the society is given a heightened declamation by the use of the sharply angular melodic phrases of bars 34-44. Central to this passage, the vocal line reaches its highest note (E) at bar 40. The pitch content of the phrases of the second section become more varied, consisting of two new additional pitches, B<sup>b</sup> and E<sup>b</sup>. In addition, the expansion of the word, Olele, into a two-bar phrase (bars 29-30), from its initial one-bar length of the first section, extends further the hemiola rhythm of the song. Thus, while the linguistic protostructure prescribes and defines a contour framework which binds the two sections of the work together, differences in rhythmic figurations and intervallic components constitute means of generating variety as well as increasing the emotional intensity of the dirge.

Linguistic considerations assume greater influence in the conception of the second song, Eiye Meta. As a result of the need to reflect certain tonal and rhythmic nuances of text, the vocal line is generally characterised by a very fragmentary outlook, variety in durational units, incoherent modal procedures and the general absence of semitonal voice leadings. These features can be observed in Ex. 34b. The lack of a coherent modal procedure, (notably in the use of a highly varied pitch vocabulary within which no particular pitch is convincingly established as a note of

repose or modal centre) can be observed by looking at different, marked, segments of Ex. 34.

The lack of a coherent modal structure highlights the background stylistic source for the organisation of the vocal part. The vocal part is meant to imitate the Yoruba oratory style in its use of highly fragmentary phrasing and a varied pitch structure. This oratory style is the Oriki mode and contrasts with the Orin mode which is employed in the first song, Agbe. The Orin mode is roughly equivalent to the European concept of song. It is characterised by a regular pulse, recurrent periodic stress and the use of analogous phrase units to complete its formal scheme. Eiye meta, however, employs the Oriki mode and, as mentioned in Chapter 4, is akin to European recitative. The mode is usually employed in traditional Yoruba performances which demand a highly dramatic delivery style. One such performance is that which accompanies burial rites of an important member of society.

The use of an incoherent modal procedure in the vocal part of Eiye Meta in addition to irregular rhythms, irregular phrase lengths and a generally loose form, reflect the very strong influence of text on the derivation of melody. Although Orin and Oriki modes have "contrasting outward characteristics they share enough inward similarities" and in a performance the two "may emerge without the impression of a break".<sup>(1)</sup>

The juxtapositions of the two modes is illustrated in Euba's third song, Nigbati Mo gbo' Rohin egan. Its ternary structure is articulated through the juxtapositions of these two modes. The poetic structure of the work provides the background for this juxtaposition.

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(1) Welch, D. "Yoruba Provisé Poetry (Oriki)" Op.cit. p.159.

The first stanza of the poem narrates a story about Egan (a village) in which strange, abominable things often happen. This stanza is set to the Orin mode constructed in a heptatonic scale on F. In the first section, bars 1-60, the use of a recurrent motivic element (Ex. 35 and its variant bars 8, 11, 12, 11-9) is linked to the use of certain words (see Ex. 35) which have an identical contour pattern recalling similar procedures in the songs of Bankole. Throughout the whole section, linguistic contour is on a par with melodic contour as illustrated in Ex. 39. The prevalence of syncopation in the section is as a result of the emphatic accentuations of the rhythmic stress of certain key words, such as Nigbati (bar 8), l'etu n-je (bars 15-16), l'e-Kiri nje (bars 13-14), (see Ex. 35). The syncopated, rhythmic setting of such words represents an attempt at reflecting their speech rhythms.

The text of the second stanza deviates from the narrative content of the first. It employs a technique of distancing frequently used by traditional Yoruba eulogist - singers. Having commented on abominable things (such as having illicit relationships with another person's wife) which happen at Egan, the singer now deviates to tell his listeners that his commentary was based on hearsay (see Ex. 38). If the information happens to be false, his friend, Alegongo, rather than he (the singer) should be held responsible.

The change of vocal technique from the Orin mode of the first section to the Oriki mode helps to articulate this technique of "distancing". In a traditional setting this is the point at which the ability of the performer to extemporise is put to the test - his ability to invent words which give his story a dramatic effect. The change of organisation in the middle section of the piece (bars 61-76) is therefore an attempt to capture a sense of spontaneous oration. But while the music characterising the second section is clearly different, elements from the

first remain; for example the pitches of the second still operate around a heptatonic scale whose lowest note is F. Four elements, however, directly link the second section with the Oriki mode:

- (i) the irregularity of rhythmic accents;
- (ii) the highly irregular and fragmentary phrasing;
- (iii) the wider intervallic span; and
- (iv) the high incidence of oblique words whose meanings demand a knowledge of Yoruba mythology and history.

African models also provide the background-framework for the conception of Ndubuisi's songs although in their use of diatonic scales and repetitive harmonies they often tend to evoke the syncretic idiom of modern Igbo vocal music. In this regard, there is a strong stylistic affinity between his original solo songs and his arrangements of folk songs. An examination of some examples of Ndubuisi's original songs below clearly shows these links.

The most striking features of Ode nji nji (soprano and piano) are the repetitive nature of the vocal part and a highly syncopated rhythmic line. The text of the song is a description of the ritual activities of ancestral spirits who appear as ghosts. Its overall form consists of four sections in which the first, bars 1-21, functions as an exposition. The second section, bars 22-61, functions as a kind of development, characterised by varied fragmentary phrases. The pitches used in the recitative section, bars 61-70, are approximate representations and the singer is expected to provide a more accurate tonal reflection of the text. The harmonic vocabulary of the piece, as in many of Ndubuisi's works, is generally unexploratory, consisting of references to Highlife in its use of the minor seventh, and the raised tonic (see bars 5, 11, 13 and 17) as embellishments.

The use of the Highlife idiom is more striking in Mama g'abara mu mba, a love song (soprano and piano). In the piece, the call and response pattern is expanded to a form which has a quasi-rondo character. The most prominent recurrent idea of the work (Ex. 36) - itself a motivic prototype of Highlife (cf its  $\frac{4}{4}$  syncopated rhythmic character, its primary harmonies and its use of embellishing minor seventh and the raised tonic) appears periodically between episodic passages.

The harmonic-tonal framework of the piece, while reflecting the basic elements of Highlife, often transcends them through the use of abrupt, chromatic harmonies used either to effect sudden change of key (as in the F minor passage of bars 51-54) or as embellishments (as in bars 27-29).

The Highlife idiom is abandoned in Afufu Uwa (worldly suffering) (for soprano, flute and piano). The song presents an harmonic vocabulary marked by dissonant textures similar to the quasi-atonal texture of sections of Ndubuisi's opera, The Vengeance of the Lizards.<sup>(1)</sup> The dissonant texture of the piece amply reflects the poetic theme of the text which centres on the frustrating life of a man who suffers from poverty, loneliness and persecution and prays to God for deliverance. Thus, while the G minor tonality of the piece generally determines important cadential progressions, highly dissonant chords are common. As illustrated in the opening two bars of the piano introduction, (Ex. 37), the preponderance of compound chords constitute a vital means of generating tension in the piece. Another feature of the work which constitutes a deviation from traditional Nigerian music is a disregard for the tonal inflections of the words. A concern for textual contours is reserved mainly for important words and phrases of the text for added rhetorical emphasis. One of the most effective of such passages occurs in bars 15-18 where

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(1) See Chapter 11, pp. 314ff

textual demands and musical considerations are satisfactorily combined. While the A<sup>b</sup> in the voice part of bars 15-17 and the sequential pattern of the same bars constitute essential features of the progression towards the C minor of bar 17, the fragmentary phrasing, the overall downward slope of the paragraph and the use of the semitone A<sup>b</sup> - G, (in bars 15, 16 and 17), help to provide an accurate reflection of both the tonal and emotive quality of the text to which the paragraph is set: Ri Oya Meregi rionu ya Ogeme, obu soebe re (Pray for God's mercy. God, Yourself, an abundance of mercy, hear this prayer).

CHAPTER TENPART SONGS : LINGUISTIC DEMANDS AND MUSICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The writing of part songs which make use of a text in traditional languages poses a considerable challenge to Nigerian composers especially when the pre-compositional demand of text (that is, the need to maintain the linguistic contour of text) is an important consideration. The prevalence of harmonic parallelisms in African music has been interpreted by some writers to be strong evidence that traditional African music lacks vertically conceived harmonies.<sup>(1)</sup> Parallelism implies that there is really only one voice, which other voices duplicate at higher or lower intervals. As we have seen, the prevalence of harmonic parallelisms is an essential feature of the musical setting of tone languages.

As the works to be discussed below will illustrate, the pre-compositional demand of traditional Nigerian tonal languages is often a vital factor in the conception of part songs by Nigerian composers. This is underlined by Bankole who, in a preface to his Three Part Songs, states that "the words (used in them) largely determine their own melodies although these melodies have been manipulated by the composer who believes that the speech tonality of Yoruba music has not that stricture and rigidity which the Western scale-system imposes on Western songs. Hence the chromatic notes are those which would ordinarily occur if such songs were taught to indigenous singers".<sup>(2)</sup> Yoruba and Igbo music are here represented by Ayo Bankole and Okechucku Ndubuisi's works respectively. We shall see how linguistic elements influence the purely musical characteristics of their compositions.

Orisha bi ofun kosi (food is very important for the body) is

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(1) See Chapter 3, p.65

(2) Introduction to Three Part Songs, Ile-Ife, 1976.

characterised by familiar features of Bankole's style: the prevalent use of the whole tone scale, tritones and parallel harmonies. Two chordal elements, F major and E<sup>b</sup> major (I and VII<sup>b</sup>), occupy a central role in the overall harmonic-tonal vocabulary of the piece. As reflected in the opening bars (4, 6, 8 and 20), it is these two chords that function as cadential resting points. Other important features of the piece include (a) the alternations between homophonic passages characterised by parallel harmonies and relatively contrapuntal passages; (b) a frequent use of chromaticism which often overshadowed the F tonality of the work; and (c) the use of antiphonal vocal divisions. The use of some of these harmonic and textural procedures is generally determined by the need to reflect both the inflectional and rhythmic features of the text. For example, the establishment of and escape from the background tonality of the work is directly linked to the alternations of homophonic and contrapuntal passages. As in the choral works by Sowande, in the homophonic passages (as in bars 1-4, Ex.1), the background key of F is periodically reaffirmed while it is overshadowed in antiphonal passages such as bars 9-21. However, in addition to their harmonic-tonal functions, the use of each of these two main types of texture is also conditioned by the need to reflect the inflectional patterns of the text. Thus in the homophonic passage the parallel harmonies between each part is an unavoidable feature of a monorhythmic setting of a tone language. The harmonic interest of bars 9-21 derives from the independent conception of phrases between the two divisions of the choir. In each of the two groups melodic patterns directly reflect linguistic contour. The most important feature of this paragraph (i.e. bars 9-21) is that the retention of linguistic nuances there takes place within the germinal structural element of the opening bars - the cadential importance of the two chords F and E<sup>b</sup>. This is because the whole of bars 9-21 can be viewed as a structural expansion of the F - E<sup>b</sup> sequence which is a feature of the



opening bars. This expansion relies on the use of embellishing chromatic chords which link the F major chord of bar 9 and the E<sup>b</sup> of bar 20. The total outline of the piece is therefore defined by alternations between homophonic and contrapuntal passages and framed by progressions between F and E<sup>b</sup> chords. Because of the interval between these chords, the importance of the whole tone scale in the work is emphasised. It is within this musical framework that the linguistic demands of text are met.

The most important feature of Ile-Iwe Nikan L'ori Yungba Yungba (School life is very enjoyable), is the use of polytonality, a feature that is also well suited to the setting of a tone language. Polytonality serves this particular purpose as well as constituting the main means of providing harmonic as well as tonal interest in the piece. Another striking feature is the use of ostinato rhythmic phrases which are derived from the speech-rhythm of the word Yungba Yungba as a background rhythmic accompaniment in bars 5-15 provided by the four lower voices. The opening bars establish the harmonic-tonal premise of the work. As Ex. 2 shows, the two antiphonal divisions of the choir move from the dissonant chord of bar 1 to a bitonal cadence in bar 3. These opening bars initiate the general tendency of the piece to continue with a progressive increase in the number of juxtaposed simultaneous tonal areas. Thus while the bitonal cadence of bar 3 becomes highlighted in bars 8-15, the parts become more polarised in bars 16-19 where four different tonal areas are simultaneously presented. The most effective use of polytonality occurs in the last paragraph of the work, bars 20-30, where the parts enter fugally. The constituent tonal areas include the two previous ones (C and E<sup>b</sup>) as well as two new ones, G and B<sup>b</sup>. The harmonic dissonance resulting from these polytonal lines remains unresolved ending on a chord which approaches a chord cluster (bar 30). Thus the overall form of the piece is framed by a progressively complex tonal and therefore increasingly stratified

textures which rely mainly on the use of bi- and polytonality which in turn guarantees continuous reflection of the contours of text as well as providing harmonic interest.

Enikeni to ba gbe ara re ga (Pride comes before humiliation) is another three-part song; it presents a different approach again at reconciling linguistic demands and musical considerations. Unlike the two previous songs, the work has a piano accompaniment. Apart from supplying a very rhythmic accompaniment and emphasising certain phrases of the vocal part, the piano articulates harmonic tonal goals which may not be achieved through the vocal parts as a result of the constraints imposed by linguistic demands.

Though the overall harmonic-tonal language of the piece consists of the same features as the two previous songs (the whole tone scale, tritones etc.), it has a different plan. In the opening section, bars 1-21, the D tonality is established. Part writing in this section is particularly conditioned by the contour demands of the text. Thus while the lower two voices move in parallel motion (see Ex. 3), the upper part provides an independent, ostinato line. The unisons of bars 24-35 are a more convenient way of continuing the musical reflection of the textual contours. They are, however, also susceptible to tonal manipulation. The lack of an overall harmonic-tonal goal in the piano part reflects this manipulation. The change to a quasi-hocket technique in bars 35-38 can also be seen against the background of the need to continue the correspondence between the inflections of text and melodic contour. The tonal vagueness of bars 24-34 is also continued here (Ex. 4) and it features until bar 42. It is not until the postlude of bars 45-51 that the D tonality of the piece is restored. Thus, musical and linguistic demands are effectively reconciled. The change to unisons and imitative procedures (including the quasi-hocket technique) in bars 25-44 are textural

features well suited to a continuous musical reflection of the contours of text. These textural procedures are also exploited for harmonic and tonal interest.

As these pieces show, Bankole is able to maintain the relationship between text and melody as it is found in traditional models - through a host of features which are beyond the stylistic grasp of early composers of Church music in Nigeria. These pieces also help to provide an insight into an important cultural root of Bankole's style. Features such as whole tone scale, tritone, bitonality, parallel harmonies, no doubt reflect the influence of romantic-impressionistic language of European music on him. But the use of these features is also linked to the influence of Yoruba traditional vocal music on him. For example, as mentioned earlier, the use of the whole-tone scale is common to the musical setting of Yoruba language and this is one reason for the common use of the anhemitonic pentatonic scale<sup>(1)</sup> in Yoruba music. In addition, the use of linearly conceived melodies, of bi- and polytonality are, as seen in his vocal works, suitable for a musical setting of a tone language. From this it can be ascertained that Yoruba vocal music and its strong ties with the demands of the pre-compositional element of language are crucial to the derivation of those familiar elements of Bankole's style.

Compared with the works of his Igbo predecessors, the innovatory feature of Ndubuisi's part songs is that European functional harmony is used with greater assurity, despite the fact that the relationship between text and tone, as found in Igbo traditional music, is often retained. The antithesis between functional harmony and the setting of the Igbo tonal language often resulted in unconventional (by European standards) stylistic features in the works of early Igbo composers.<sup>(2)</sup> Such unconventional features are still to be found in the works of Ndubuisi. Given his intimate

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(1) A scale which does not consist of semitones.

(2) See Chapter 4, p. 96

knowledge of European music, such features are, however, used consciously as a deliberate means of reflecting certain nuances of Igbo traditional vocal music. According to Ndubuisi, an intimate knowledge of the Igbo language is a necessary requirement for such nuances to be properly reflected in original compositions. In the discussion below the main stylistic features of his part songs will be highlighted.

Onina Manyà ogo (Palwine song) (S.A.T.B.) is cast in ternary form. Apart from presenting a contrasting thematic idea, the middle section (bars 29-35) is characterised by a more homophonic setting. In the opening bars of the work (Ex. 5) the four parts are divided into two. The first group (soprano and alto) provides melodic lines which generally reflect the rhythmic and inflectional character of the text. In contrast, the tenor and the bass, set to nonsensical words, provide melodic lines not tied to any linguistic demand, since the nonsensical sound (a-e) does not prescribe any rhythmic or tonal pattern to be reflected in the melody. Freed from the constraints of linguistic demand both tenors and basses provide notes which help clarify the harmonic character of these opening bars.

The antiphonal division of the opening bars is also reflected in the fugal section of bars 13-27 where only the tenors and basses state the main melody, Ex. 6. The increased contrapuntal setting of this section relies considerably on the simultaneous use of different texts, although parts often merge to emphasise important textual phrases. The most significant feature of the section is the deviation from the homorhythmic element of the opening bars to a polyrhythmic texture.

The homophonic middle section (bars 29-35) presents the most dynamic tonal movement of the piece, the progression to the dominant. As in the first section, although linguistic contour of text is not here pervadingly

reflected in the melodic setting, certain words often retain their contour pattern. Thus the downward contour pattern of the word gbayirimo is often reflected. As can be observed in bars 29-31, much of the parallel harmonies in the section depend on the need to reflect, melodically, the contour pattern of this word. For harmonic reasons however, this linguistic demand is sometimes abandoned. For example, the note d in the tenor part of bar 31 (2nd beat) does not fall a step down in the 3rd beat and so the inflectional contour of the word gbayirimo is not reflected. That movement would have resulted in the use of a foreign note to the V<sup>7</sup> chord on the third and fourth beats of bar 31.

In the last section of the work, where Ex. 6 reappears (bars 36-42), linguistic demands are also compromised for a particular musical reason, the need for a clear restoration of the D minor tonality of the piece. Thus, while there is a musical reflection of the speech rhythms of the text across the entire texture (hence its mono-rhythmic, syncopated character), the continuous musical retention of the inflectionary patterns of the text is limited to the soprano part alone (bars 36-42). Other parts, on the other hand, often move independently of the linguistic contours. These are compromises that Bankole did not permit in his own musical settings.

Fugal procedures are also used to offset harmonic parallelisms in Nwa Aramonu (SATB) - a lullaby. The use of fugal procedures in the opening section (bars 1-8) reflects the interaction between a modal and diatonic organisation in the piece. For example, while the first entry has a modal character, its treatment of the counter-subjects (bars 3-8) has a diatonic orientation notably in the use of the semitonal leading note. The tonal relationships between these entries consist of both the perfect 4th between the first two entries and the perfect 5th between the last two (D minor - G minor - D minor - A minor).

A constructional element of the piece is the use of texts which have identical inflectionary as well as rhythmic features. For example, the words biko and ewo both have a downward contour movement as well as a spondee rhythmic articulation - both of which are often reflected in their musical settings. By using words and phrases such as these, which have the same rhythmic and inflectionary patterns, Ndubuisi is able to keep certain musical motives constant, thereby maintaining coherence while retaining the linguistic patterns of important words. Such a procedure is featured in the sequential passage of bars 19-27 (Ex. 7). Words with the same inflectionary or rhythmic features are marked with the same letters in Ex. 7. While this paragraph still operates within the generally restrictive harmonic character of the piece, additional interest is generated in its sequential progressions. The cross-rhythmic texture of this passage derives from the juxtapositions of the conflicting rhythmic patterns suggested by the speech rhythms of the text. Since such juxtapositions often emphasise linear rather than vertical orientations, harmonic clashes often result from them as in bars 20, 22, 24 and 26. While these two elements (the cross rhythmic character and harmonic clashes) help to reflect some of those "tacit" features of Igbo vocal genre they also constitute the main musical interests within the generally unexploratory harmonic vocabulary of the piece.

One of Ndubuisi's most successful examples of the integration of the linguistic and musical elements is presented in Ajama kwara ngwo ngwo (Pack your load and go). The work was one of the commissioned part songs for a choral workshop which took place at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1978. Organised by the Goethe Institute in Lagos and the University of Nigeria, the two main participants at the workshop were the University of Nigeria Choral Society and a visiting German group. The most striking features of the work include (a) the pervadingly polyrhythmic texture

which often suggests a vocal translation of typical African drum rhythms;

(b) a formal outline characterised by a continuous process of variation and at times evoking the principle of collective improvisation; and

(c) the prevalence of the call and response technique. In addition, the thematic/motivic process of the piece is characterised by constant conflict and accommodation between linguistic and melodic considerations.

Within the largely unstructured, formal character of the piece - a feature also underlined by the lack of any significant key change - two vaguely defined sections are identifiable. These are bars 1-27 and bars 28-60. While Ex. 8, the main theme of the piece, dominates in the first section, the second section is characterised by freshly appearing ideas (Exx. 11 a-g).

In the opening bars, textual contour and melodic movement generally correlate with each other. The solo announcement of the main theme (Ex. 8) and the harmonic parallelisms of bars 7-9 are textural features which guarantee this correlation. Typically, in Ndubuisi's works, this correlation (between the contours of text and melody) does not pervade the rest of the work. The non-congruency between text and tone is exemplified in the bass line of bars 13-15 which does not follow the contour pattern of the words aja-mala and Imegbube mo as reflected in the opening bars (1-2). While the text-tone contour correspondence is not a pervading element of the work, certain musical features are closely aligned to the text. For example, the rhythmic articulation of the speech rhythms of certain words in the opening bars provide part of the basis for the continuity of the piece. The most prominent of such words are ajaparingwongwo, imegbugbe mo and nowiyodo. The rhythmic articulation of the word ajaparingwongwo provides a particularly important motif (Ex. 9). The recurrence of this motivic figure (e.g. bars 8-9 and 11-12), serves as one of the main unifying elements of the piece. Another example of such a linguistically-

generated unifying rhythmic motif is Ex. 10 which reflects the speech rhythms of the word nowiyodo. This phrase, which occurs in such bars as 7-9 and 17, was earlier anticipated in the piano introduction of bars 1-3, Ex.12.

In fact, the most significant organisational feature of the piece in the absence of a dynamic tonal-harmonic framework is the interaction between such recurrent linguo-musical ideas and freshly appearing ones. Given the stylistic framework of the piece in which the conception of motivic elements is often attached to linguistic patterns, the appearances of new thematic phrases is directly related to the appearances of new words. The element of continuous variation which characterises the piece is therefore strongly tied to the pre-compositional features of the text. In Ex. 11, some of such new thematic phrases are given. The differences in the structure of these examples illustrate the increasing level of variety which characterises the whole work.

The main functions of the piano include the articulation of recurrent key phrases as well as the heightening of the percussive quality of the piece. Its polyrhythmic character is also emphasised by the piano especially in the provision of conflicting beat divisions to add to the already multi-layered texture of the vocal part. As a result of the constant fluctuation and ambiguity of its metric patterns, the overall rhythmic patterns generate considerable tension.

While its harmonic vocabulary shows a predominantly vertical orientation, dissonant tonal clashes often occur between parts. Such harmonic clashes are illustrated in the piano introduction (Ex. 12) where there is a modal clash between the fifth and sixth degrees of the scale. The strength of the harmonic progressions are often weakened as a result of the frequent uses of such tone clashes, compound chords and the proliferation of syncopated and polyrhythmic figurations. These



features - tone clashes, syncopated and polyrhythmic textures - tend to depict the main poetic theme of the text (the anger of a landlord who, annoyed with one of his tenants, asks him to pack his load and get out).

These harmonic procedures (as highlighted in Ex.12), reflect the fundamental opposition between the modal-quality of melodic ideas, as well as rhythmic-linear conception of the vocal lines and European functional harmonic context within which they are presented. The distinctive flavour that characterises Ndubuisi's works result from the interaction of these two different dialects and re-echoes the prophetic works of earlier Igbo composers, notably those of Harcourt Whyte.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### LARGE CHORAL WORKS

Music as part of a multi-media experience, is as mentioned earlier, fundamental to African musical tradition.<sup>(1)</sup> The association of music with dance, religious and social activities in traditional societies is a common feature of musical activities in African culture. A corollary to this principle is seen in the manner in which music is conceptualised, for example, among the Igbos and the Yorubas. In Igbo culture, music is not defined in absolute terms. Indeed, the Igbos have no word for music as it is understood in Europe. For example, the word Egwu (or Nkwa or Uri) refers not only to the phenomenon of sound but also to features such as drama, poetry and dance. Thus, a musical performance is a multi-dimensional activity which involves not only singing or instrumental playing but also features dance, drama and poetry. According to Mbonu Ojike:

In Africa, the musician is not just the originator of the harmonious sounds or the vocalist that sings the piece. No, the musician is not even (just) the dancer who lends dramatic vigour to the whole art nor the contingent of artists whose instruments are the sine quanon of music. To us all these are musicians; for the word music means Egwu, the goddess who orders harmony, rhythm, sounds and movements into a hair-raising unity. It is that unity that we call Egwu or music.<sup>(2)</sup>

A similar principle exists among the Yorubas. Although music is often verbalised as "song-singing" (orin kiko) or drum-playing (ilu-lilu), the all embracing phrase for a musical performance is Ere sise (entertaining), a generic term which encompasses singing, instrumental playing, dancing, poetry and so on.

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(1) See Chapter 1.

(2) Ifionu, A. Op. cit. pp.207.

One of the most important symbols of the association of music with non-musical elements is the musico-dramatic genre of West African storytelling - the Alo (Yoruba) and the Ofo (Igbo). The Alo which alternates song and speech is often "set in a mythical time which has existence only in man's imagination exploring fanciful and poetic protagonists whose activities involve what may be imaginatively improbable in human experience". As an educative medium Alo "by means of symbols ... shows how one can cope with the powers of one's own soul".<sup>(1)</sup> These powers are personified in the stories whose moral lesson often establishes what is and what is not acceptable to Yoruba society.

Of the imported European musical forms to Nigeria, those which provide the most effective means for the transmission of the multi-media concept of African music within a contemplative tradition are the Opera, the Musical, the Cantata and the Oratorio. The emergence of religious musicals, and consequently the modern Folk Opera, in the first half of this century in Nigeria, and their popularity are symptomatic of the African fascination for combining music with drama. In this chapter we shall examine two works - a cantata by Ayo Bankole and an opera by Ndubuisi to illustrate some of the ways through which modern Nigerian composers have re-expressed the multi-media concept within European classical forms.

The Festac Cantata is Bankole's last major work, and a consummation of his musical style. It was commissioned by the Federal Government for the Second World Festival of Black Arts and Culture (FESTAC) held in Lagos in February 1977, three months after the death of the composer.<sup>(2)</sup> The work makes use of a chorus, soloists and a mixed ensemble of European and African instruments: the organ, woodwind and brass and nine Yoruba

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(1) Kubik, G. "Alo - Yoruba Story Song" African Music, Vol.4, No.2, 1968,  
 (2) See Chapter 5, p. 134. p.11.

percussion instruments (Ex. 3). The text of the Cantata is taken from the Old Testament (Psalms 14, 24, 53 and 91) and its main theme centres on praise and adoration of God. Like Akpabot's Verba Christi, the work has a devotional character.

A striking feature of the Festac Cantata is that it extensively incorporates elements of Yoruba ceremonial and praise music. Considering the constant interaction between melodic and linguistic considerations in it, the work is a large-scale experiment in text-tone relationships. In addition, the harmonic language is generally chordal (European-Victorian) although it is often reworked in African, as well as in twentieth century European terms. From an overall point of view the work is divided into two main sections. This division relies on a number of factors such as the organisation of keys and recurrence of thematic-textual materials (Fig. I). The melodic and (at times), the harmonic procedures employed in the piece generally remain within the stylistic boundary of Yoruba vocal tradition, for example, in the use of pentatonic and other modal scales, a small melodic ambit and parallel harmonies, recalling similar procedures in Bankole's earlier songs.<sup>(1)</sup> Unlike those songs, however, the composer has set himself a greater challenge in writing the Cantata - in particular, that of sustaining interest and maintaining coherence in a relatively large work. The continuous reliance of a melodic contour on textual contour and the use of a generally limited vocabulary of pitches in the vocal parts are features which tend to inhibit structural variety. The restrictive character of the vocal parts is, however, often compensated for by the provision of dissonant chord structures as an instrumental accompaniment. This procedure, which occurs as an occasional foil to the prevailing Yoruba-modal character of the vocal parts, constitutes a vital means of generating sporadic tension.

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(1) See Chapter 9.

FIGURE I

FESTAC CANTATA : GENERAL OUTLINE OF FORM

DIVI- SION	NO.	TITLE	TYPE	MAIN KEYS	TEMPO
A <div>↑          ↓</div>	1	ONA RE O	RECITATIVE (TENOR)	(A MIN-F)	ADAGIO
	2	AH OSEUN FUN MI	CHORUS/ALTO SOLO AND SOPRANO SOLO	F	ALLEGRETTO CON MOTO
	3	INSTRUMENTAL INTER- LUDE	-		ALLEGRO
	4	NITORI IWO OLUWA	CHORUS	E	MODERATO
	5	ONA ARA	RECITATIVE (SOPRANO)	C	MOLTO PARLANTE
	6	MASE DA OLUWA L'EJO → ONA ARA	DUET (SOPRANO)	C	CANTABILE
	7	ASIWERE WI LI OKAN RE ↓	ARIA (TENOR)	D MINOR	ANDANTE
	8	ON SE KISA	CHORUS	A (MODAL)	ANDANTE
	9	OBA OLOGO META	CHORUS/EGE CHANTER	A	PARLANDO
	10	A O SEUN FUN MI	CHORUS/SOPRANO SOLO TENOR SOLO ALTO SOLO DUET (S&T)	F	ANDANTE
B <div>↑  ↓</div>	11	OKE TO WA NIWAJU MI	BASS SOLO/CHORUS	C	ADAGIO
	12	TI OLUWA NI ILE ↓	CHORUS/SOPRANO SOLO ALTO SOLO TENOR SOLO BASS SOLO	C	ALLEGRO
	13	ON SE KISA	CHORUS	C/A (MODAL)	MAESTOSO

Inter-sectional thematic and motivic links occur across the entire work. Such unifying links exist either directly through periodic reappearance of important themes or through the use of motives which recall or anticipate those of their sections. A table showing some of the most significant thematic/motivic links in the work is provided in Ex. 1. In the discussion below, sections of the work will be examined to illustrate the use of the stylistic features highlighted above.

The first chorus (Ah O seum fun mi) introduces elements which will recur, and include the use of passacaglia-like harmonic progressions characterised by compound chords and the division of the choir into two antiphonal parts (SA and TB). These parts often engage in simple imitative procedures with the main theme of the chorus constantly exchanged between them. This imitative procedure is periodically interspersed by call and response patterns. For example, in bar 32 ff (p.2), in a manner reminiscent of traditional Yoruba vocal procedure, a solo alto "breaks" into an incantation-like sequence of short melodic phrases while the remaining voices change to a repetitive answering chordal phrase which is characterised by parallel harmonies (Ex. 2).

The extensive instrumental interlude in bars 80-102 (pp.5-7) makes a predominant use of African instruments. As in Euba's Abiku, the instrumentation pattern here follows those of traditional Yoruba patterns where instruments are divided into primary and secondary groups. This division is noticeable in the allocation of both rhythmic and melodic patterns to individual instruments reflecting a hierarchy within the nine melo-rhythmic instruments (Ex.3). The section also features a highly stratified melo-rhythmic texture. Seen within its formal framework, this section (like others in which traditional instruments are used) serves to provide a contrasting texture to those where European instruments are used, as well as enhancing the dramatic character of the work. A striking ingredient of this function

is the gradual increase in the density of the texture, highlighted in the successive entries of instruments in bars 80-96, and its associated dramatic build up.

While the opening chorus has a static harmonic-tonal character the second (Nitori iwo Oluwa, pp.7-12) is more dynamic. A striking harmonic feature of the chorus is its use of sequential progressions to effect (often abrupt) key changes (Ex. 4, bars 28-36). Such an harmonic procedure is reflected in the frequent use of melodic sequences as the main developmental procedure in the vocal part. We have, in Chapter 9, demonstrated the viability of the use of sequences as a means of developing melodies which are word borne. In addition to its harmonic and tonal variety, the thematic process of the chorus is characterised by a format in which successively new melodic materials continue to appear. As a result, the chorus has an open ended form (Fig. II). While motivic correspondence exists across its different paragraphs, the chorus consists of at least four different and equally significant melodic ideas (Ex. 5). The lack of a closed thematic outline and of clearly defined principal and subsidiary thematic areas are strong evidence of the formal dependence of the chorus on the prosodic-narrative sequence of the text.

One of the sections of the work where the combination of modally-derived harmonies and chromatic chords is used with significant dramatic effect is the short chorus On Se Kisa (pp. 18-19). The main theme here (Ex. 1d) has appeared in the instrumental interlude (bars 96-99). It is presented here by the chorus On Se Kisa, in a developing strophic form. Correspondingly, the accompaniment is arranged in harmonic strophes, each of which tends to introduce increasingly dissonant chords. Since the vocal line remains throughout within a heptatonic scale (the second degree of which functions as the note of repose), the use of this harmonic procedure ensures an increasing level of tension between the vocal

FIGURE II (FESTAC CANTATA)OUTLINE OF FORM : NITORI IWO OLUWA (pp.7-12)

Bars	Paragraph	Theme	Tonal Areas
1-36	1	Ex.5 (a)	E → G
36-63	2	(b)	C, F, A, D-A
64-70	3	(c)	C
71-84	4	(d)	E



lines and the harmonic support. In addition, the use of a pedal on the note E (which in conjunction with the Sekere (rattle) reiterates an additive rhythm,  $3 + 3 + 2$ , against the  $\frac{4}{4}$  of the voice part) enhances the modal importance of the note A as the centre by functioning as its dominant preparation. Considering the fact that the remaining numbers of the first division of the Cantata (see Fig. 1) return to the simple harmonies of the opening bars, this section On Se Kisa, functions as the climax of the first part of the work.

The use of Yoruba Oriki mode in the work can be observed in the next section, pp. 20-21, where it is employed as the Yoruba equivalent of the recitative. While in the section the chorus deviates into a recitative-like melodic line, a solo voice - the Ege chanter (a Yoruba eulogist) - chants in praise of God (Ex. 6). The whole section is a re-enactment of the typical Yoruba ritual-musical setting. The choice of instruments here also underlines this ritualistic element since both the Sere (a ritual rattle) and the double gong are two sacred instruments commonly employed in traditional Yoruba solemn rites.

The reappearance of the opening chorus brings the first section to an end. The chorus reappears, basically in its original form, although the texture is generally more dense with a sporadic incantation-like line used as a descant.

The second part of the work (which begins without a break) opens with an instrumental introduction in whose initial bars (Ex. 7) there is considerable use of chromaticism. These opening bars illustrate the general tendency of the second division to increase the momentum of the Cantata through the use of referential chromatic textures and more extensive key changes. As Fig. III shows, the first section (of the second part) pp. 26-34, is outlined in paragraphs defined by the alternations between the

FIGURE III (FESTAC CANTATA)OUTLINE OF FORM : BASS SOLO WITH CHORUS (pp.26-34)

Bars	Medium	Main Tonal Areas	Section	Theme
1-14	Organ	Chromatic	Introduction	Ex. 7
15-32	Bass Solo	Chromatic → A major	1st episode	
33-41	Organ	Chromatic - A minor	Link	Ex. 8
42-60	Chorus/Bass Solo	C	Rondo theme	Ex. 9
61-69	Organ	Chromatic	Link	Ex. 10
70-92	Bass Solo	Vague	2nd episode	
93-101	Organ	Chromatic - A minor	Link	Ex. 8
102-120	Chorus/Bass Solo	C	Rondo theme	Ex. 9
121-134	Organ	Chromatic → D major	Link	Ex. 7
135-161	Bass Solo	Chromatic → D (minor/major)	3rd episode	
162-172	Organ	Chromatic -	Link	Ex. 8
173-191	Chorus/Bass Solo	C	Rondo theme	Ex. 9

bass solo (which makes its first appearance in the work) and the choir. Throughout the section Ex. 7 and another chromatic motif, Ex. 8, are employed alternately as links between the different paragraphs. While the chorus/bass solo paragraphs generally retain the C tonality of the section in addition to reiterating a melodic idea, Ex. 9, the bass solo sections function as episodes in which new thematic ideas are presented. In addition, contrasting with the generally diatonic harmonies of the chorus sections, is the use of chromatic harmonies in the solo episodes. They range from those which are employed as embellishments of strophic and simple harmonies to those which help to make local tonal identities obscure. For example, in the first solo paragraph of bars 15-32, chromatic embellishments, which occur as either passing harmonies or as appoggiaturas, help to enrich a harmonic sequence that establish the key of A. The dissonant relationship between the harmonic support of the organ and the vocal parts reaches its most advanced point in the third episode, bars 135-161 (pp. 32-33). Here the organ, in contrast to the diatonic character of the vocal lines, provide bi-chordal sonorities which are juxtaposed semitonally (Ex. 10). There is, however, a complementary relationship between the intensified chromatic character of the accompaniment and the increasing declamation in the vocal part. This declamation derives from the fact that the bass solo's part (now stating variants of the "rondo" theme, see Ex. 10) is organised in a series of rising sequences which reach the highest note of the paragraph, an E, in bar 152.

The final chorus Ti Oluwa ni ile (pp. 35-54) opens with a fugal paragraph which is followed by a very long episode. This episode is divided into eight sub-sections which correspond to the different verses of the text used in the chorus. An interesting detail of construction in the opening bars is that a successful effort is made to maintain the

linguistic contour demand within a four-voice fugal exposition whose customary key changes as well as entries leave very little room for such a compromise (that is, the compromise between contour of text and melody). As Ex. 12 shows, the organ begins the exposition by providing the first two parts while the voices (divided into two parts) enter in bars 14 and 18 (p.35) to state the remaining two entries of the subject and the answer. The continuity of the chorus constantly recalls these germinal features: the restrictive force of textual patterns over melodic impulse and the supplementary harmonic role of the organ.

The long episode, bars 32-220 (pp.36-46), is also characterised by alternations between solo voices and the chorus and is constructed in a highly sectionalised format in which different paragraphs introduce new melodic ideas and new key areas, as shown in Fig. IV. An important means of unifying the different paragraphs is the constant use of a melo-textual motif. This motif, Ex. 12t, which is derived from the subject Ex. 12a appears, periodically, either in instrumental interludes or chorus sections. In addition to the use of extensive key changes, the main harmonic procedure of the Cantata (the abrupt juxtapositions of chromatic and diatonic textures) is also recalled. Thus, the approach to the climactic point of bar 207 (p.45) relies on the deviation from the predominantly diatonic harmonies of bars 1-165 to the chromatic texture of bars 166-207 where chords built in fourths are juxtaposed in semitones, as shown in Ex. 13. The use of these chords reaches a climax in bars 205-207 where a local atonal texture appears.

The reappearance of Ex. 1e, almost immediately after this harmonic climax (bars 221 ff (p.47)), anticipates the end of the Cantata where a) the texture becomes thicker; b) the fugal subject reappears (bars 221 ff); and c) the traditional Yoruba instruments are brought back (bars 247 ff, p.52 ff). The ending of the piece on the "Yoruba supertonic cadence"

FIGURE IV (FESTAC CANTATA)FINAL CHORUS : TI OLUWA NI ILE - OUTLINE OF FORM

Bars	Section	Main Tonal Areas
1-31	Fugal Exposition	C
32-83	1st episode	C minor
84-119	2nd episode	C major - E minor - E major
119-132	Fugal theme	E major - A major - A minor
133-172	3rd episode	Generally unstable
173-220	4th episode	C (unstable most of the time)
221-239	Fugal recapitulation	C
240-263	Ex. <b>1d</b>	C/A modal

highlights the importance of "African modality" in the total harmonic conception of the work.

The Vengeance of the Lizards by Okechukwa Ndubuisi explores a core element of traditional African, in particular, Igbo belief: the continuous spiritual correspondence between human beings and their ancestors who continue to interfere in the daily lives of mortal beings. Ancestral spirits can be both malevolent and benevolent, resolving societal conflicts and at the same time capable of invoking their wrath on erring members of society. These ancestral spirits or deities are themselves lesser gods through whom people can communicate with God (Chukwu), the head of the universe. As messengers of Chukwu with delegated powers, they can be consulted in times of difficulty through often highly dramatised religious worship. Messages from the ancestors are decoded by Eze Muo/Ala, specially ordained priests, who are the authoritative mouthpiece of the divine powers.

This religious framework provides the most significant context in traditional Igbo society for "organised theatre", a dramatic genre in which music, dance, incantations and prayers are combined to achieve "a spiritual sustenance of the human soul". It is also "a social force that tempers the human tendency to thwart his conscience, his fundamental purity".<sup>(1)</sup> Events, other than religious worship, which provide an avenue for the Igbo traditional theatre include:

- (i) Funerals - the Igbasu osu (i.e. the "shooting up of the corpse for a spirit life");
- (ii) Initiation ceremonies, e.g. a) the "ceremony of coming of age" (ima akwa/ima mkpuru/iwa Ogodo, i.e. "the tying of cloth wrap"),  
b) the initiation into masquerade cult, i.e. the lba muo; and

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(1) Meki Nzewi: "Some social perspectives of Igbo traditional theatre" The Black Perspective in Music, 1978, pp.113-142.

(iii) Festivals, e.g. the Ifejioku - the new Yam Festival.

As Nzewi has observed "organised traditional theatre (in Igbo land) in addition to its various utilitarian roles within a community was at the same time conceived a social entertainment as well as a mass communication media".<sup>(1)</sup>

Ndubuisi's The Vengeance of the Lizards is defined stylistically by the incorporation of the features of Igbo-organised theatre within the framework of the operatic tradition to achieve a modest but unique musico-dramatic style.

The Vengeance of the Lizards belongs to the same category of Nigerian operatic works as Opu-JaJa by Adam Fiberrissima and the Lost Honey by Meki Nzewi. These works, in their conception represent a development beyond that of the folk operas of composers such as Hubert Ogunde and Duro Ladipo. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the works of Ogunde and Ladipo, like those of their contemporaries, are orally conceived. However, although the music of the works of modern operatic composers such as Ndubuisi and Fiberrissima is notated, much of the dialogue (which alternates with the musical numbers) is often extemporised.

The episodic structure of The Vengeance of the Lizards reflects typical examples of the tragic and the comic aspects of life in an Igbo community, focussing on traditional beliefs of reincarnation, divination, rites of passage, initiation ceremonies and witchcraft. Its libretto, written by the composer himself, is based on a fictitious story set in the Bende division of old mid-western Nigeria of 1919. According to the composer "then as now, the image of secret societies and witchery were supreme and unchallenged.... Society's climate was nurtured by them in reasoning and experimentation".<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) Ibid, p.129.

(2) Personal interview with the composer.

The work is scored for soloists and chorus:

The Vengeance of the Lizards

List of principal characters:

Otumokpor	-	Superwitch	-	Soprano
Biakama	-	Otumokpor's envoy	-	Tenor
Nnanna	-	The offender	-	Tenor
Ada	-	Nnanna's wife	-	Soprano
Village girls			-	Chorus
Village boys			-	Chorus
Masquerades			-	Chorus
Village elders			-	Chorus
Witches			-	Chorus

It makes use of the piano and percussion instruments - the rattle and the tam-tam. The plot of the opera goes thus. In a village called Komolu lived a leopard in a nearby forest called Komolu forest. The villagers loved and respected this animal since it was "a spiritual leopard" who represented the "symbol of power and might" of witches, especially that of the superwitch, the Otumokpor. One day, acting on the orders of Otumokpor, the leopard killed a villager as a punitive measure for an act of disobedience. The villagers were angered by this and therefore killed the leopard. The killing of the leopard in turn provoked the anger of Otumokpor and other witches who later asked Biakama (himself a witch) to find the very person who killed the leopard that he may be killed. Biakama eventually identified Nnanna as the one who killed the leopard. As the witches were preparing to take their vengeance, however, the superwitch, Otumokpor, stopped them, saying, "Nnanna shall not be killed again!" This decision angered the witches and the opera ends without a resolution of the disagreement between Otumokpor and the other witches.

The discussion below is not intended to be a detailed examination of the opera. Instead, its general outline will be examined in addition to



looking at the main ways through which the composer integrates the musical and dramatic language of the work.

The opera is in two Acts. There are four Scenes in the first while there are two in the second. A diagrammatic summary of both the dramatic and musical structure of the work is provided in Fig. V. As the diagram shows, the opening scene functions as an introduction to the opera. In it the background conflict of the opera - the killing of the leopard and the consequent annoyance of the witches is presented. In Scenes 2, 3 and 4 the spectacle shifts to familiar scenes of Igbo traditional life: the moonlight plays (which includes a wrestling dance for boys), masquerade dances, marriage bargainings and ceremonies. Moonlight plays generally provide an opportunity for boys and girls who have reached the age of puberty to meet and socialise. Thus by the end of Scene 3, Nnanna (the boy who will later be identified as the person who killed the leopard) and Ada agreed to marry each other. It is in the last Scene of Act one that their marriage is consummated through a series of bargainings and ceremonies. The opening Scene of the second act takes place in the matrimonial home of Ada and Nnanna, where both are getting very worried about the impending tragedy, that is, the tragedy which will befall Nnanna for killing the leopard. It is not until the last Scene, the finale, that the spectacle shifts to the supernatural world of the witches where they prepare to take their vengeance on Nnanna.

As this outline shows, the main dramatic thrust of the opera takes place in the opening and the closing Scenes while those intervening deviate from the tragic element of the work to focus on the more comical aspects of traditional village life. But, even in the central scenes, there are occasional references to the theme of the story through a host of musico-dramatic features.

FIGURE VGENERAL OUTLINE OF THE VENGEANCE OF THE LIZARDS

ACTS	SCENES	CHARACTERS	MAIN TONAL AREAS	SUMMARY OF PLOT
I	1 (INTRODUCTION)	INSTRUMENTAL, BIAKAMA, OTUMOKPOR AND THE WITCHES	$D^b \longrightarrow G$	INTRODUCTION
	2	ADA, NNANA, VILLAGE GIRLS AND BOYS	$G - C -$ $E^b - C - G$	MOONLIGHT PLAYS, WRESTLING DANCE
	3	NNANA, ADA, MASQUERADES, THE WITCHES	$G, F$	NNANA AND ADA SEEK PROTECTION FROM THE MASQUERADES
	4	ADA, NNANA AND FAMILY ELDERS	$E^b, F, G$	MARRIAGE RITES
II	1	NNANA, ADA, WITCHES	$C, F, C$	NNANA AND ADA NOW GET VERY WORRIED OVER THE TRAGEDY WHICH AWAIT THEM
	2	THE WITCHES, OTUMOKPOR, NNANA	$C, E^b, A^b$	THE WITCHES PERFORM THE RITES THAT WOULD LEAD TO THE KILLING OF NNANA UNTIL OTUMOKPOR STOPS THEM

The introduction consists of a short overture, two arias and the first chorus, all of which introduce some of the principal characters: Biakama, Otumokpor and the witches. In addition it also presents some important musical features of the work. These are:

- a) the announcement of important melodic ideas which will continue to have associated dramatic functions;
- b) the evocation of the musico-ritual features of traditional Igbo religious format and their dramatic significance; and
- c) the presentation of the main harmonic styles of the work the juxtapositions of which often help to articulate sequences of the dramatic action.

The introduction is conceived as a single entity (Fig. VI) within which the various numbers (the overture, the arias and the chorus) take their place. The overture, bars 1-57 (whose texture and rhythm are conceived to evoke the sonority of Ngedegwu - Igbo xylophone), opens with an arpeggio motif which is characterised by a compound chord structure (see Ex.14a). This motif, because of its syncopated rhythm and its dissonant quality, foreshadows and adumbrate the tragic theme of the opera. A notable feature of the whole introduction is that it is divided into paragraphs of different melo-rhythmic ideas and textures (Fig. VI) and Ex. 14 a-g. The motivic sequence of the introduction - that is the successive appearances of new melo-rhythmic paragraphs - is constantly activated by a) changing textures; b) different rates of articulation; c) changes in key; and d) fluctuations in dynamic level.

The use of varied thematic ideas, abrupt key changes, chromaticism, fluctuations in dynamics and tempo in the introduction help to generate a cumulative tension. This provides an appropriate musical milieu for the

FIGURE VITHE INTRODUCTION : PARAGRAPHS AND USE OF THEMES/MELODIES (pp.1-13)

Tempo	Section	Bars	Character	Theme/ Melody	Main Tonal Areas
Allegro molto	1st paragraph	1-19	Piano, percussion and xylophone	Ex.14a	D <sup>b</sup>
Meno mosso (ma poco)	2nd paragraph	20-39	Piano, percussion and xylophone	Ex.14b	Unstable
Poco animato	3rd paragraph	40-57	Piano, percussion and xylophone	Ex.14b&c	Unstable
↓	4th paragraph	58-83	Biakama	Ex.14d	B <sup>b</sup> minor → D <sup>b</sup> major
	5th paragraph	84-89	Piano	Ex.14a	D <sup>b</sup>
	6th paragraph	90-96	Witches chorus	Ex.14e	D <sup>b</sup>
	7th paragraph	96-110	Piano	Ex.14a&b	Unstable
Andante	8th paragraph	111-143	Otumokpor (quasi recitative)	Ex.16	Unstable
Andante →	9th paragraph	143-164	Biakama	Ex.14f	G
Allegro modernto	10th paragraph	165-175	Witches chorus	Ex.14g	G

presentation of the background conflict of the Opera in the introduction. Biakama's entry in bar 58 to announce the killing of the leopard is marked by a change from the preceding tonal vagueness (that of bars 46-57) to a rather serene B flat minor tonality. His announcement is intoned with an impassioned and emotional quality, reflected in the angularity, its assymetric character and irregular rhythmic character of his melodic line (Ex. 15). These melodic qualities help to enhance the agonised declamation in the words An Yo-le wo'nya, which is a lamentation over the death of the leopard. The momentary change of timbre and texture from the piano chords of bars 58-63 to the punctuating melodic fragments of bars 66-72 also enhances the declamation in Biakama's part. Biakama's function, however, also includes invoking the spirit of Otumokpor. As has been pointed out earlier, the appearance of supernatural forces in traditional contexts is usually an occasion of high drama. Musical features exist here which seek to evoke such contexts. For example, prior to the appearance of Otumokpor, the witches (in bars 90-95) sing a chorus which is chanted to ritualistic syllables rendered in call and response manner (Ex. 14e) and in bars 96-110 the instrumental interlude deviates into a predominantly chromatic texture in which the "theme of tragedy" (Ex. 14b) is recalled. This passage moves into a rallentando, in bars 109 ff, ending dramatically on a piano  $\begin{matrix} \# & 7 \\ b & 5 \\ & 3 \end{matrix}$  chord which marks the appearance of Otumokpor.

Like that of Biakama, Otumokpor's part (see Ex.16) has an emotive character, reflecting furious anger and a forceful promise of vengeance. Apart from the use of angular lines and irregular phrase lengths, this emotive quality is paralleled in the unstable tonal motion of bars 111-143. Thus, the passage is characterised by fleeting and vaguely defined tonal areas none of which dominates. It is the entry of Biakama in bars 143 ff that resolves this tonal tension through a cadence in G major. Here he

responds to the instruction of Otumokpor to identify the killer of the leopard in a series of short melodic ejaculations interspersed with spoken texts (Ex. 14f). The entry of Biakama in bars 143 also initiates a new harmonic and rhythmic texture in the Opera. His appearance recalls the simple diatonic folkly character of the composer's earlier songs. The witches' part returns (once again) after Biakama's (bars 166 ff) with Ex. 14G continuing in a modally inflected harmonic style.

Their reappearance enhances the supernatural nature of Otumokpor as well as reiterating the message that vengeance will be taken on whoever is identified as the killer of the spiritual leopard. Two melodic ideas stand out in the introduction both of which have an important dramatic function: the chromatic motive (Ex. 14b) which has been referred to as the theme of tragedy and the melodic line of the witches' chorus (Ex. 14g). As exemplified in the introduction, Ex. 14g is present throughout the Opera, periodically recalled to reiterate the annoyance of the witches and their promise of vengeance. Ex. 14b functions less directly. Whenever it reappears it adds significantly to the drama, and at the same time offsets the tonal areas.

The opening scene also introduces some of the main elements in the work - the use of folk-inspired harmonies and Igbo folk songs. These elements are used later in the work, to evoke specific traditional Igbo religious and social contexts being recreated.

The greatest concentration of folk songs in the Opera occurs in the remaining scenes of the first act (that is scenes 2, 3 and 4) where the focus shifts to aspects of traditional Igbo village life. Correspondingly, harmonic and rhythmic procedures show greater allegiance to traditional sources: the texture is generally diatonic with very little use of

modulation; rhythmic patterns often are syncopated. In addition musical numbers occur within largely extemporised spoken dialogues. The moonlight scene is divided into two sections. In the first, village girls perform a traditional dance singing popular "maiden" songs, the first of which (Ex. 17a) is treated in a theme and variation format. In the second section of this scene, village boys perform traditional wrestling dances, set to contrasting powerful rhythms, and a host of traditional songs (like Ex. 17 b & d). As they dance they invite the girls to join them. The girls finally agree to their request leading to the "Embrace" chorus, p.31, which is notable in its use of quasi-highlife texture. While enacting aspects of traditional life the moonlight scene focuses on two more important characters of the Opera, Nnana (later identified as the boy who killed the leopard) and Ada who later marry each other. The focus on these two characters exists in their musical roles within each of the two groups of boys and girls : either taking leading - soloist roles within choruses organised in call and response sequences, as in the Incitation song, or rendering arias, most of which revolve on the theme of love as in the moonlight scene, p.17.

The marriage scene is divided into sections which represent the different stages of the marriage rituals. Folk songs which typify each of these stages are interpolated into the dialogue (see Ex. 18). There is a correlation between the less dynamic musical character of the moonlight and marriage scenes and the fact that the main background conflict of the Opera is temporarily set aside for some of the more comical aspects of traditional life. Thus generally speaking, the dramatic significance of these scenes relies less on the musical organisation than in the association of events with traditional contexts. These are reinforced through the use of folk music materials and scenic effects. Despite this there are occasional and often effective references to the main conflict

of the Opera - references which make the initial use of musical symbols in the introduction clear. We shall cite two instances:

- 1) After the serenade duet in Act 1, Scene 2, Ada complains of hearing a strange sound saying, "something has dropped on me, help me". Here Ada was beginning to worry over the death punishment which would be meted out to her husband, Nnana. Accordingly, the music changes from the folk serenade to a highly emotive, tonally unstable passage (bars 25-42) in which the chromatic idea is recalled once again. Other features of the passage include a slow tempo, a meandering melodic line and a fantasia-like texture (Ex. 19). The appearance of the witches and their melody (Ex. 14g), after this passage (p.37) helps to dramatically reinforce Ada's expression of fear, since in the introduction the witches have appeared to symbolise the supernatural and destructive power of Otumokpor.
- 2) In Scene 3 (Act 1), Nnana appeals to "Kamalu", god of peace and love, for protection from the witches who have the "wicked plans to take my love away from me", in a passage typified by a recurring harmonic pattern (Ex. 20). Immediately after this appeal, another supernatural spirit appears, this time the more benevolent masquerade which gives Nnana and his wife an assurance of protection. Here melodic and rhythmic patterns which are characteristic of the Igbo masquerade dances (Ex. 21) are given. In order to undermine the assurance given by the masquerades, the witches return at the end of the scene, once again with Ex. 14g to reiterate their promise of punishment to Nnana.

The recurrences of such musical ideas - which have dramatic allusions - also provide one of the main ways of generating some element of coherence throughout the Opera.



In the chorus "No smoke without fire" (Act II, Scene 1, pp. 75-88), the witches, now set for revenge, sing of their anger. Their supernatural power of destruction is compared with the devastating effect of fire on West African harmattan grass:

No smoke without fire  
It is harmattan fire and wind  
harmattan married the fire  
They've chosen the driest  
As their honeymoon place is their driest place  
where something fumes.

Prominent features of the chorus include the constant use of a motif Ex. 22 - a derivative of the chromatic motif - Ex. 14b as a constant unifying element and the use of melodic and harmonic features, which is their more tonal character, provide temporary relief from the folklorist elements of the last three scenes. The remaining part of the finale is organised in sequences of unbroken ritual dances which are to lead to the killing of Nnana. Here ritual chants and exclamative melodic lines (see Ex. 23) are sung by the witches to enhance the ritual atmosphere. In the last aria of the opera, Otumokpor expresses her change of mind. Nnana will not be sacrificed again - a decision which contradicts the plea of the witches: "engage Nnana to serve the pleasures of the witches of Kamalu". This decision, which brings about an abrupt end, is expressed in the most emotional aria of the piece. The aria is characterised by a) a free, rhapsodic formal outline; b) alternations of speech and melody (bars 103-106); c) punctuating yodellings and exclamative syllables set to scalar melodic lines (bars 46-51), and, most effectively, d) a recitative line in bars 137 ff. The chorus join in the last ten bars enlarging the texture and so provide the work with a sudden but dramatic ending.

As this discussion has shown, the clarification of Ndubuisi's musico-dramatic language relies on three main procedures. There is, in the introduction, a predominant emphasis on the exploitation of the dramatic

effects of abrupt key changes, biting dissonant textures and the use of musical symbolism. While there are occasional uses of these features in the remaining sections of the opera the dramatic line is, in addition to the use of dialogue, propelled through the use of referential associative folk rhythmic and melodic elements to evoke traditional scenes. Throughout the opera there is also a concerted effort at exploiting the expressive potential of traditional Igbo vocal nuances to achieve considerably heightened emotive effects as illustrated especially in the last 94 bars of the work.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The discussion running through this thesis has shown various compositional techniques through which Nigerian composers have attempted to incorporate elements from traditional African music into their works. On the one hand, we have works such as the Passion Sonata, the Folk Symphony and Oyigiyigi which are conceived from a predominantly European stylistic perspective (within which African elements occur peripherally) while on the other, works like Igi nla so, Three Yoruba Songs and Ofala maintain very strong links with traditional Nigerian music. In their attempts to incorporate elements of traditional Nigerian music, Nigerian composers have relied on the use of the main features of African music identified in Chapter 3. These include:

- i) Polyrhythmic and multi metre textures;
- ii) Melo-rhythmic lines which lack a consistent metric motion;
- iii) Strong percussive textures;
- iv) Improvisatory-like forms and call and response procedures;
- v) The principle of constant variation;
- vi) Unchanging tonalities;
- vii) Harmonies which, in their modal and heterophonic qualities are Nigerian inspired;
- viii) Harmonic procedures which take into consideration the linguistic demands of text;

- ix) The quotation of Nigerian melodic and rhythmic ideas;
- x) The use of melodic patterns which follow the contour of their texts;
- xi) The use of traditional Nigerian instruments;
- xii) The evocation of the multi-media concept of traditional Nigerian music;
- xiii) The evocation of Highlife textures.

These features are fused with European elements: forms such as the suite, the sonata, rondo, fugue, symphony, opera and cantata; harmonic principles from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well as 'impressionist', serial (expressionist) and atonal procedures; instruments ranging from solo instruments to symphony orchestras. The study also shows how the emergence of these works are linked to the historical developments in nineteenth century Nigeria. As a result of Europe's contact with Nigeria, these developments were to have a significant effect on the political, socio-economic, cultural, religious and, consequently, musical traditions of the country.

Thus, as the study has shown, the use of traditional Nigerian elements represents one important way through which Nigerian composers have captured the spirit of their traditional culture as they understand it. In addition to incorporating traditional Nigerian musical elements, Nigerian composers have also made reference to extra-musical elements which have relevance to Nigerian society. Evidence of this has been noted in such vocal works as Akpabot's Verba Christi, Bankole's Festac Cantata, Euba's Abiku and Ndubuisi's Vengeance of the Lizards.

If, however, references to social, religious or political issues in musical compositions are too overt, such works are in danger of having their musical significance undermined.\* While traditional Nigerian musical performances often derive greater meaning through their association with extra-musical events, the appreciation of such performances, by the people, does not preclude a recognition of their musical qualities. In other words, musical consideration constitutes an essential factor in the appreciation of musical performance in traditional Nigerian setting. For example, in a Yoruba Dundun performance, the ability of the master drummer to constantly vary his melo-rhythms while maintaining unity through repetition is an essential stylistic factor for a successful performance. It therefore rests on any composer working within a socio-cultural climate as we have in Nigeria, to be judicious in his integration of both the functional and structural features of traditional Nigerian music.

Instrumental works also provide an important medium for the re-interpretation of elements of traditional Nigerian music. It is true that, unlike their traditional counterparts, modern instrumental works by Nigerian composers are conceived outside a specific social or religious event and may not make any explicit reference to a particular social or religious

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\* The recent case (in Europe) of Michael Berkeley's cantata Or Shall We Die is similar; a pacifist work first, a musical work second - although the composer denies this.

issue through the use of words. If, however, such modern works are heavily infused with rhythmic, melodic and formal elements of Nigerian music (as we have in Igi nla so), they will elicit a positive response from the Nigerian audience. Such a response can derive from the appreciation of the musical (structural) ingredients of the works as well as their relevance to any extra-musical ideas or contexts (religious or secular) and any emotional reactions associated with such contexts. For example, the use of the call and response pattern and the use of polyrhythmic textures in such works as Sketches and The Wanderer are perceptible Nigerian musical features which also carry important extra-musical messages. This is because, in traditional Nigerian culture each of these two features carries extra-musical, social meaning. As discussed in Chapter 3, group dominated call and response patterns are often used in traditional ceremonies to reinforce the people's belief in group solidarity. Likewise, the conception of an ensemble (e.g. Dundun) in which instrumentalists play different hierarchies of rhythmic patterns is symbolic of the Yoruba concept of the division of labour which prescribes the allocation of duties according to the competence and ability of the individual members of society.

It must, however, be stated that, despite their extra-musical cultural significance, the traditional elements employed within a modern Art composition may be perceived from a purely musical perspective by some listeners. This is because the perception of a musical style presented in a work will ultimately depend on the disposition of the listener who may not be able to ascribe extra-musical meanings to sounds especially when

there are no cues or explicit references (in the form of a programme, for example) to any such extra-musical connotations.

In the light of this discussion, the attempts already made by Nigerian composers represent a step in the right direction. It must, however, be mentioned that the fusion of European and African elements in the works of modern Nigerian composers, who ascribe to retaining a strong African character in their works, should be carried out in such a way that the African elements used will not be overshadowed by European materials as in Sowande's Oyigiyigi and Bankole's Passion Sonata. Despite the very strong references made to Nigerian elements in such works as Sketches and Scenes from Traditional Life, it must be stressed that Nigerian composers may need to employ more traditional instruments in their bid to create works which are relevant to the aesthetic needs of their society. This is because no matter how bold and unpretentious are the references made to Nigerian music, in a work scored for European instruments, those references are bound to be coloured and even undermined by the nuances of the European instruments employed.

But as we have noted, the practice of using traditional instruments in modern Art compositions will have to be consolidated through an educational system which trains people who can handle these instruments from notation. Up until the present time, music curricula at both the federal and state levels in Nigeria tend to focus mainly on the study of European music. Although efforts are now being made in institutions such as the Universities of Nigeria, Ife, Lagos and the Polytechnic of Ibadan, the teaching of traditional Nigerian music has yet to take its rightful place within the educational system in the country.

Usually the teaching of traditional instruments tends to come and go as yearly budgets allow. For example, although traditional Igbo

instrumental instructors were hired on a part-time basis to teach at the University of Nigeria in the 1977-78 session, they were not available in the 1978-79 or 1979-80 sessions.<sup>(1)</sup> Thus while the university recruits teachers both within and outside the country to teach European music on a regular basis, it does not consider the recruitment of instructors of traditional music as equally important.

This reflects the educational imbalance within Nigerian music curricula. The understanding and the appreciation of traditional Nigerian music should occupy an important place in music departments and schools in Nigeria. Since one of the most important objectives for which schools and universities are established in Nigeria is to generate the appreciation and the awareness of the Nigerian cultural heritage - against the background of a strong European cultural challenge - the teaching of traditional Nigerian music should not occupy a subservient position.

The propagation and the appreciation of works by modern Nigerian composers depend, therefore, on a bi-musical programme designed to embrace traditional African idioms on the one hand and, on the other, European forms and techniques. Such a bi-musical approach is called for in view of the strong impact of European music on Nigeria.

While the fusion of European and African musical idioms represents a culturally valid compositional option by modern Nigerian composers, there is, however, no reason why works could not be conceived entirely for traditional African instruments, as in Euba's Dirges. Since, as a result of the impact of European culture on the Nigerian social climate, the notion of concert music will continue to gain popularity, the idea of deploying traditional Nigerian instruments in a work designed for a listening rather than a participating audience remains an option yet to be greatly

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(1) During this writer's 3rd and 4th years as an undergraduate at the University of Nigeria.



embraced by Nigerian composers of modern Art music. The structural realisation of such works (that is, those conceived entirely for African instruments) will no doubt reflect a more relevant artistic creation.

APPENDIX 1LIST OF WORKSA. Six Selected ComposersFELA SOWANDEOrgan Works

1955

1. Kyrie (Chappell, London)
2. Oyigiyigi (1958, Ricordi, New York)
3. Gloria (1958, Ricordi, New York)
4. K'amura (1945, Chappell, London)
5. Prayer (1958, Ricordi, New York)
6. Obangiiji (1955, Chappell, London)
7. Joshua fit de battle ob jericho (1955, Chappell, London)
8. Yoruba Lament (1955, Chappell, London)
9. Jesu Olugbala (1955, Chappell, London)

Choral Works

10. The wedding day (S.S.A. with piano, 1957, RDH)
11. Sometimes I feel like a motherless child (S.A.T.B. a capella, 1955, Chappell, London)
12. My way's cloudy (S.A.T.B. with piano, 1955, Chappell, London)
13. De d' arks amovering (S.A.T.B. with tenor solo, 1955, Chappell, London)
14. Same train (S.A.T.B. a capella, 1955, Chappell, London)
15. Steal away (S.A.T.B. a capella, 1955, Chappell, London)
16. Roll de ole chariot (S.A.T.B. with piano and rhythm combo, 1955, Chappell, London)
17. All I do (S.A.T.B. with piano and rhythm combo, 1961, Ricordi, New York)
18. Goin'g to set down (S.A.T.B. with soprano solo, 1961, Ricordi, New York)
19. Couldn't hear nobody pray (S.A.T.B. a capella with soprano solo, 1958, Ricordi, New York)
20. De angels are watching (S.A.T.B. a capella with soprano and tenor solo, 1958, Ricordi, New York)
21. Nobody knows de trouble I see (S.A.T.B. a capella, 1958, Ricordi, New York)
22. Wheel oh wheel (S.A.T.B. a capella, 1961, Ricordi, New York)
23. Wid a sword in ma han (S.A.T.B. a capella, 1958, Ricordi, New York)
24. Sit down servant (T.T.B.B. a capella and tenor solo, 1961, Ricordi, New York)
25. Out of zion (S.A.T.B. with organ)
26. Oh render thanks (hymn-anthem, S.A.T.B. with organ)
27. Nigerian national anthem, an arrangement (S.A.T.B. with organ, 1960)

Solo Songs

28. Three songs of contemplation (tenor and piano, 1950, Chappell, London)
29. Because of you (voice and piano, 1950, Chappell, London)
30. Three Yoruba songs (voice and piano, 1954, Ibadan)

Orchestral Works

31. Four sketches (full orchestra, 1953)
32. African suite (for string orchestra, 1955, Chappell, London)
33. Folk symphony (full orchestra, 1960).

AKIN EUBASongs

1. Six Yoruba folk songs (voice and piano, 1959)
2. Two Yoruba folk songs (for unaccompanied choir, 1959)
3. Three Yoruba songs (for baritone, piano and Iyalu, 1963, Oriki Scores).

Piano and Chamber Works

4. Igi nla so (for piano and four Yoruba drums, 1963, Oriki Scores)
5. Four pictures from Oyo calabashes (piano, 1964)
6. Impressions from Akwete cloth (piano, 1964)
7. Wind quintet (1967)
8. Ice cubes (for strings, 1970)
9. The wanderer (for violin, cello and piano, 1960)
10. Scenes from traditional life (piano, University of Ife Press, 1977)
11. String quartet (1957).

Orchestral Works

12. Introduction and allegro (for orchestra, 1956)
13. Abiku no. I (for Nigerian instruments, 1965)
14. Four pieces (for African orchestra, 1966)
15. Oluroumbi (for symphony orchestra, 1967)
16. Abiku no. II (for three part choir and Nigerian instruments, 1968)
17. Dirges (for speakers, singers and African instruments, 1972)
18. Alantangana (for singers, dancers and Nigerian instruments, 1971)
19. Two tortoise folk tales (for speakers and Nigerian instruments, 1975)
20. Morning, noon and night (for singers, dancers and Nigerian instruments, 1967)
21. Chaka (for soloist, chorus and orchestra, 1970).

SAMUEL AKPABOTOrchestral Works

1. Overture, a Nigerian ballet (for small orchestra, 1959)
2. Scenes from Nigeria (for small orchestra, 1962)
3. Three Nigerian dances (string orchestra and percussion, 1962,  
published by Oxford Univ. Press, 1977)
4. Ofala festival (for wind orchestra plus 5 African instruments, 1963)
5. Cynthia's lament (for soloist, wind orchestra and 6 African  
instruments, 1965)
6. Nigeria in conflict (for wind orchestra and 8 African  
instruments, 1973)
7. Three roads to tomorrow (wound track for the film of the same name,  
1959)
8. Journey through Africa (sound track for feature film of the same  
name for U.S.I.A. Washington, 1965).

Choral Works

9. Te Deum laudamus (Church anthem, choir and organ, 1975)
10. Verba Christi (cantata for 3 soloists, chorus and orchestra, 1977).

JOSHUA UZOIGWE

1. Four Igbo songs (soprano and piano, 1972)
2. Two Igbo songs (soprano and piano, 1973)
3. Four Nigerian dances (piano, 1976)
4. Lustra variations (piano, 1976)
5. Sketches (piano, 1977)
6. Masquerade (piano and Iyalu, 1980)
7. Ritual procession (for African orchestra, 1981)
8. Fanfare (for wind orchestra, 1981)
9. Watermaid (soprano and orchestra, 1983).

AYO BANKOLEKeyboard Works

1. Ya orule (piano, 1957)
2. Nigerian suite (piano, 1957) (Chappell, London, 1961)
3. Christmas sonata (piano, 1959)
4. The passion sonata (piano, 1959) (University of Ife Press, 1977)
5. English winter birds (piano, 1961)

6. Toccata and fugue (organ, 1960, published by University of Ife Press, 1978)
7. Three toccatas (organ, 1967).

#### Vocal Works

8. Cantata in Yoruba: Baba se wa l'omo rere: father make us good children (for female chorus and chamber orchestra, 1958)
9. Cantata in Yoruba: Jona (for soprano solo, speaker in English, drum, piano, tambura and orchestra, 1964)
10. Cantata in Yoruba: Festac (for soloists, chorus and orchestra which includes woodwinds, brass and some Nigerian traditional instruments, 1974)
11. Three part songs: for female choir, 1959 (University of Ife Press, 1975)
12. Ona ara (mysterious ways) (for full chorus, soloists, organ and Yoruba instruments, 1970)
13. Ore ofe Jesu Kristi : the grace of Jesus Christ (for unaccompanied choir, 1967)
14. Fun mi ni'beji No.I (for unaccompanied choir, 1970)
15. Fun mi ni'beji No.II (for unaccompanied choir, 1970)
16. Three Yoruba songs (for baritone and piano, 1959, University of Ife Press, 1976)
17. Ten Yoruba songs (for voice and piano, 1966)
18. Adura fun alafia (prayer for peace) (for voice and piano, 1969)

#### OKECHUKWU NDUBUISI

##### Part Songs

1. Nnwa aramonu (S.A.T.B. a capella)
2. Onina manya ogo (S.A.T.B. a capella)
3. Ajama-kwara ngwongwo (S.A.T.B. with piano)
4. Anoro anokwukwu (S.A.T.B. a capella)
5. Uma-wo (S.A.T.B. a capella)
6. Ose va (folksong arrangement, S.A.T.B. a capella)
7. Ogun salewe (folksong arrangement, S.A.T.B. a capella)
8. Ozuitem obodom (folksong arrangement, S.A.T.B. a capella)
9. Eringa (folksong arrangement, S.A.T.B. a capella)
10. Dim oma (folksong arrangement, S.A.T.B.)

##### Solo Songs

11. Nwa mgbogho delu uli (folksong arrangement, voice and piano)
12. Ife di na oba (folksong arrangement, voice and piano)

13. Nyarinya (folksong arrangement for voice and piano)
14. Anwu ti min dze (folksong arrangement, voice and piano)
15. Oji m'eme onu (folksong arrangement, voice and piano)
16. Okokoroko (folksong arrangement, soprano and alto solo)
17. Mama g'abara mu mba (voice and piano)
18. Afufu uwa (voice and piano)
19. Nwa n'ebe akwa (voice and piano)
20. Ode nji nji (voice and piano)

#### Instrumental Works

21. Ikpirikpe ogu (war dance) (piano)
22. The blue nocturne (for soprano saxophone and piano)
23. Rhapsody in C major (flute and piano)

#### Operas

24. The vengeance of the lizards
25. Dr. Feeles

### B. Church Music : Composers and Compilers

#### HARCOURT WHYTE

##### Hymns

- 1a. Atula egwu (S.A.T.B., unaccompanied)
- b. Chukwu gozi'e gi chebe gi (S.A.T.B., unaccompanied)
- c. Onye nmenie (S.A.T.B., unaccompanied)
- d. Chukwu no rue ebigh'ebi (S.A.T.B., unaccompanied)
- e. Chukwu nke bi n'igwe (S.A.T.B., unaccompanied)
- f. Chere oge ya (S.A.T.B. unaccompanied)
- g. Rue de mgbe (S.A.T.B. unaccompanied)
- h. Obu n'ututu m'obu n'anyasi (S.A.T.B., unaccompanied)
- i. Ihe nenwegh oyiri (S.A.T.B., unaccompanied)

#### T.O. KUTI

2. Yoruba sacred songs : This compilation by the Reverend Kuti consists of 57 compositions by various church music composers including T.K. Phillips.

DAYO DEDEKE

3. Ma gbagbe ile, Oxford University Press, London, 1963.  
This is a collection of 50 compositions by Dayo Dedeke.

ORIN YORUBA

4. University of Ife Press, 1974  
This compilation by J. Ajibola consists of 71 compositions by various church composers (including Ajibola).

FAYO SIN

5. Ibadan, 1985.  
A compilation consisting of 102 compositions by various church composers and in use at St. Stephen's Church, Ibadan.

The following is a list of the works that form the basis of the analyses in chapters 4, and 6-11. Copies of all works on this list can be found in the Music Collection of Leicester University library:

## Chapter 4

Dayo Dedeke                      Ma gbaghe ile

## Chapter 6

Fela Sowande

Oyigiyigi  
Kyrie  
Gloria  
Prayer  
Nobody knows de trouble I sea  
Going to set down  
Sit down servant  
Couldn't hear nobody pray  
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child

## Chapter 7

Ayo Bankole	Nigerian Suite Ya Orule Passion Sonata English Winterbirds
Joshua Uzoigwe	Four Nigerian Dances Sketches Luska variations
Akin Euba	Scenes from traditional life The Wanderer Three Yoruba Songs Igi nla so

## Chapter 8

Samuel Akpabot	Three Nigerian Dances Overture for a Nigerian Ballet, op. 2 Symphonic poem - Ofala festival, op. 3 Cynthia's Lament, op. 6 Nigeria in conflict, op. 10 Verba christi, op. 12
Joshua Uzoigwe	Watermaid
Fela Sowande	African Suite Folk Symphony
Akin Euba	Abiku no. 2

## Chapter 9

Joshu Uzoigwe	Four Igbo songs
Akin Euba	Six Yoruba Songs
Okechukwu Ndubuisi	Anwuti mini Dze Mwa ngboho delu uli



Chapter 9 contd.

Ayo Bankole	Three Yoruba Songs
Akin Euba	Three Yoruba Songs
Okechukwu Ndubuisi	Ode nji nji Mama G'abara Mu mba Afufu Uwa

Chapter 10

Ayo Bankole	Three Part Songs
Okechukwu Ndubuisi	Ajam'a - Kwara Ngwongo Onina Many a ogo Nwa Aramonu

Chapter 11

Ayo Bankole	Festac cantata
Okechukwu Ndubuisi	The Vengeance of the Lizards

APPENDIX IIINTERVIEWS

1. Prof. Akin Euba, Ile-Ife: January 1985; London: July, 1986.
2. Dr. Samuel Akpabot, Ibadan: January, March, May, 1985.
3. Dr. Joshua Uzoigwe, Ile-Ife: January, February, April, 1985.
4. Mr. Moloye Bateye (on Fela Sowande and Ayo Bankole)  
Ibadan: February, April, May, 1985.
5. Mr. Okechukwu Ndubuisi, Nsukka: October 1985, August 1986.
6. Dr. Kanu Achinivu, (on Harcourt Whyte and Nigerian Church Music)  
Nsukka: September, 1986.
7. Pa Ola Omidéyi, (on Nigerian Church Music)  
Ibadan: June 1986.
8. Prof. Robert Armstrong, (on Duro Ladipo)  
Nsukka: September, 1986.
9. Mr. Yemi Adeleke, (on Duro Ladipo and Yoruba Instrumental Music)  
(Master Drummer) Ibadan: January, March, June, 1986.

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Highlife" in Eight Urban Musical Cultures, Illinois, 1978.
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